

The SMART SET

Edited by
George Jean Nathan
and
H.L. Mencken.



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Distance

By George Sterling

*ABOVE the western hill
A soft, great star was still;
As mute you seemed, ere Love's farewell was told
And eyes begin to fill.
Soon were you gone, and soon those tears were cold
That neither pride nor pity could withhold.*

*Gone ere the star could set
Or lips, in silence met,
Foretell the silence between you and me.
I dreamed I could forget,
But now my heart is but your memory—
O lost in years that were or years to be!*

*Now more and more we seem
The shadows of a dream,
Learning too late what waifs of Change we are,
Deep beyond deep they gleam,
Remembered still, but oh! how very far—
Silver of tears and silver of the star!*

The SMART SET

The
Aristocrat
Among
Magazines



In the Tea Shop

By Aldous Huxley

IT was the couple seated at the table next to mine that interested me most. The girl's round face and the pale, thin face of the young man wore an expression of profoundest seriousness and the tone of their conversation was serious too, even when the talk turned on nothing graver than muffins and the color of the icing on the cakes. I guessed the approach of a crisis; and, sure enough, the young man suddenly leaned across the table and said in a low but thrillingly distinct voice:

"Will you marry me?"

The girl was silent, knitted her brows, clinked spoon on teacup.

I waited anxiously for her reply. And from all round me in the crowded tea room there came to my ears voices and the snatches of speech, little tatters of other people's lives and thoughts.

A didactic voice said, "They cremate you in your best clothes, you know."

And a surprised ingenuous voice said, "You don't say so."

Then there was a Russian voice. "Philosophically speaking," it said, "the mind is divided into three parts: reason, emotion and something else which I cannot at the moment remember."

And a triumphant voice came pealing. "My children *never* need a laxative."

Finally the young woman looked up and said, "No, I won't marry you."

The young man rose to his feet. "Thank God!" he said, and walked out of the shop.

I poured myself out a second cup of tea.



Idiots

By *W. E. Sagmaster*

I

"**R**UN along now, you bad, bad dog! How dare you come around here when I have repeatedly told you to stay away? Well, what have you got to say for yourself? Answer me, do you hear?"

II

"Of course I am going to cast my vote! I have absolutely no use for the man who does not think it worth his while to exercise his great privilege of assisting in the selection of the man who is to be at the head of his country. Vox populi, vox Dei!"

III

"Hortense, I love you! Will you be my wife?"

IV

"Let me have one bottle of Presto Hair-Grower and a couple of boxes of Ponce de Leon pills."

V

"Lay on 'er, ol' boy! Right over the Coca-Cola ad.! Oh you Babel! Oh you Bambino!"

VI

"Man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long."—*Pope*.

VII

"You say they are going to play D'Indy tonight? How lovely!"

VIII

"I'd rather have a little Ford than any of those big, blustering cars. Take notice some time,—you'll see the big car stalled time and time again, but the little ol' Ford will ramble right along. And as for hills,—nothing to compare with a Henry. Yes, sir, a Ford for me every time!"

IX

"Ha, ha, ha! Here's a good one! It says: 'Jiggs: Thompson ought to make a good fighter if war is declared. Briggs: Why? Jiggs: He's been married ten years.' Ha, ha, ha!"

X

"Look, Nell! This little coupon! Wait, I'll read it to you:

Look, Belle! This little coupon! Do you remember three years ago, when I was nothing but a discontented, underpaid shipping-clerk, how you pointed it out to me one evening, saying: 'Dick, here's just the thing for you. Listen: *Learn by mail how to become an expert Architect, Ambassador, Aviator, Accountant, Bricklayer, Bootlegger, Banker, Congressman, etc., etc., etc., INTERBOROUGH CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS*. Why don't you try that, Dick? I know you would succeed!' That very night I mailed the coupon. That was my start. Look at me today,—president of my company! I could give no ambitious man, young or old, better advice than to sign this little coupon and mail it to the INTERBOROUGH CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS at once, NOW!"

Quick, Nell, get me a pen and some ink! I'm going to mail that coupon at once, NOW!"

The Exotic

[*A Complete Novelette*]

By *Eleanor Ramos*

CHAPTER I

AS Sophie typed the closing paragraph of a letter, she was deciding whether she had better wear her black satin dress to the Victory Tennis Club dance that night, or the lavender georgette. The black satin was a year old, but it suited her perfectly.

Sophie Butler was a tall girl with small breasts and rounded, conspicuous legs. Shrouded in a prosaic serge street skirt, or covered with several layers of silk and muslin, they proclaimed themselves with the pagan immodesty of confident beauty. Nor were they the chaste limbs of an Artemis; they were rather the legs of a Twentieth Century Venus, that tarry on asphalt as if it were a flowery path, hesitate at shop windows, and cleverly adjust themselves to the abrupt shifts of syncopated dances. As for the rest, she had straight, pale, orange hair, full eyes of a humid greenish-blue, with sensitive pupils, and soft, white skin that marred easily.

She pulled the finished letter from her typewriter, addressed an envelope for it, and entered a door with the name "Mr. Hilliard" printed on its ground-glass panel. He was the junior member of the law firm for which she worked. It was a small green-carpeted room. Near the window was a great mahogany desk, in one corner a shabby black leather couch piled with law journals, and in the other a bag of golf sticks.

Mr. Hilliard was out and Sophie laid

the letter on the half-open desk slide. It would be all right for it to wait for his signature until the next morning.

Sophie went back to her desk and absently lowered the drop typewriter, thinking of her black dress. The rest of the office-force put on overcoats and hats. She scarcely heard Mr. Parker's benevolent "Good evening, Miss Butler," as he sailed majestically from the office in an aura of Havana cigar smoke; she was unaware of the metal paper-clip that Sam, the fat clerk, flicked at her in passing. She was considering the desirability of a new white collar for the black dress. Her mind toyed with the black dress, but was really lost in a maze of vague discontentment.

She was unreasonably irritated. She wanted something desperately, but what she wanted she could not name. She tried to trace the source of this feeling of dissatisfaction, and discovered that it had been with her since the beginning of the Fall. As the weather had got colder, her discontent had grown proportionately, and from the beginning of this November day, with its leaden sky and smell of snow in the quiet air, her mood had been almost morbid.

She sighed and put away the pretence of the black dress. Then, before she realized, she had got an impressionistic view of herself.

She had always been self-conscious and rather analytical of others, but, like the average young person, she viewed herself from a distance, a flattering distance and at an advantageous angle. She had seen herself good-looking, mis-

understood, full of rare talent which could not be extricated for want of proper assistance. She had seen herself standing quite apart from the rest of the world, and yet keeping the look of disdain from her eyes. But at this moment she was given admission into herself; perhaps the key was her inherent honesty. She was horrified at the disorder and dirt in the house of her soul, and at its dank odor of vacancy. She was also humiliated that she had been so foolish as to have built a wall about such a place.

"My life is only what I do every day," she thought, "and what have I done? Only what a million other American girls, New York girls, do: forgotten the use of my brains, forgotten the use of my heart, and lived a life of two dimensions—a long day of meaningless work and a short night of cheap pleasure, with nothing behind it."

She went into the library. One entered a green swinging door, with a little round window like a port-hole. She seldom had occasion to go into the library, and she hoped that a few minutes spent in its unfamiliar surroundings would jolt her recreant mind back again into its usual channels.

She did not press the electric button, and the room was only faintly lighted from the outer office. She could just see the big table and the book-lined walls, punctuated by the pale bust of Pericles, the Athenian, and bronze casts of Lincoln and Roosevelt.

She drifted to the window, which opened on a narrow court. The building across the court was almost entirely devoted to the offices of a large railway company. The people in these offices worked until half-past five, and Sophie watched them as they moved about, as silent and active as mechanical figures. Sophie remembered that there was a small city in Pennsylvania named for this railroad, and these offices seemed to be a twin city.

Life in miniature was moving under her eyes. A man with green-shaded eyes paused a minute over a letter, stretched his arms and yawned widely;

a girl appeared from nowhere, thrust a telegram at him, and then disappeared, after having renewed his activity. Groups formed and dissolved constantly, going through conventional motions. It was like a scene in a cinema drama, constant movement, without depth.

"How is my life different from theirs?" she thought.

She knew precisely what these people would do at half-past five. They would throw themselves out of the building, and then, answering the growl of the Subway demanding its evening meal, clamor and fight to enter the gaping jaws.

The strange thought came to her that the people were made for the Subway. Or some of them would scale the heights of the Elevated; and yet others would march to the traffic-hungry bridge. She would do this last. She would walk quickly, thoughtlessly, with the crowd. She would buy an evening paper at the Brooklyn Bridge and read it during the ride home. She would then eat hastily, almost silently. After, she would dress for the performance with Bert, for the hundredth time, of the prologue of the sex drama.

She felt a vast distaste for Bert, with his flat head and creased trousers, his confident smile, his naïve optimism, his correspondence school education, his job, his Y. M. C. A. activities. And the Victory Tennis Club was cheap, as cheap as its name, and as ridiculous, for the members never won except from each other. She had suggested the "Three Balls Tennis Club," but her facetiousness had been scoffed at. The "Brooklyn Tennis Club" had been rejected as not original enough.

Sophie shook her head in despair at herself when she thought of the Tennis Club. In the summer the girls tottered listlessly around the courts, their hair flying, waving rackets quite at random. The young men were extremely energetic. They rushed about, with open mouths and wildly swinging rackets, and were always careful to call "Ready!" before they served. Not one

member could play even a fair game, and consequently no one improved. Only Sophie, who had seen a good match once, realized how bad they were. At her suggestion that they practice serving, several members had answered that they knew they were rotten, but were having just as much fun as if they were Johnstons or Tildens.

During the winter, the club had a dance every Wednesday night, and several theatre parties. The dance was also rather a mockery. It is true, the members danced more expertly than they played tennis, but there was little lightness, little merriment, about the gatherings. Girls danced almost every dance with their escorts, and they danced silently, seriously, the freedom of their embrace contrasting oddly with the conventionality of their expressions.

Standing at the window, she discovered just what was wrong with the Tennis Club:

"Typically middle-class; if we were shop girls and mechanics, we might be a little rough, but it would be fun; and if we were wealthy we would be at least smart and perhaps somewhat fast. But we are only middle-class, and we are stiff and stupid and silly."

Looking into the November darkness, she resolved to drop out of the club, beginning that evening. She became tranquil when she had reached the decision. She fancied she saw a flake of snow drift past the lighted window opposite. Trinity Church struck the half hour, and it sounded like the bang of a door behind her.

The room was silent except for the hiss of the steam coming from the radiator. Listening intently, she became conscious of the labored breathing of the harassed streets, sixteen stories below her. She had never before noted this sound, which is the background of city life and as natural to the city-dweller as the ticking of a familiar clock. As she listened, her tranquillity blazed into happiness.

She smiled, and her voice said, quite distinctly, "It is true; absolutely true!"

She did not know why she said this.

The room felt hot and she raised the window above the ventilator. The noise of the street hit her ears like an enormous jazz-band: bells clanged, cars roared, whistles sounded on the river. It was the music of her country, and of her time; music not made for meditation or sentiment, but the music of perpetual motion. The street did not repel her as did the Subway and Elevated. No, the street was good. It carried people a little roughly, perhaps, but without charge and with a merry heart. It needed people, but its appetite was easily appeased. She formed a new program for the night: she would walk on the streets until dinner time; then she would dine alone in a restaurant and later go to the moving-picture or vaudeville show.

Her plan seemed extremely exciting to her, and she prepared for it with the enthusiasm which girls are supposed to feel at the prospect of an evening with a young man. She powdered her nose and put on her coat and hat. Her coat was a shabby fur one—a marmot—from two years before. Her hat was gray velour and shaped like a man's. One realized that it accentuated Sophie's face like an exclamation point.

* * *

When she left the elevator at the street floor, Sophie walked toward the back of the building which opened on Nassau Street, instead of going out the main entrance into Broadway.

Usually, she hated the scant tawdriness of Nassau Street, but tonight she craved its more intimate contact. Downtown Broadway after dark is one of the most depressing of the world's avenues. It does not seem to be a street; it creates the impression of a very formal institution, a vast university of business, where students are imprisoned all day, looking at nothing but diagrams. Even the crowd cannot pit itself against the inhumanity of the stone buildings, with their pilastered fronts and mysterious atlantes—utilitarian temples, flanked with haberdashery shops instead of bay trees. The human figure is dwarfed there, as it is in

a Chinese landscape, by the enormity of the system which creates it.

In Nassau Street, one perceives nothing of the system, but a great deal of the laboratory activities of business. Business does not stalk quietly through Nassau Street, throwing a great shadow. It skips and scurries along, gesticulating and exclaiming with Hebraic emotionalism. The street still holds the narrowness and irregularity of the country lane from which it sprang, but shops now stand where blackberry bushes used to grow, and loitering rustics have given way to small merchants and sidewalk hawkers.

At the door, Sophie stood watching the people as they passed.

The air was gently chill, and held a promise of snow. Since childhood, this kind of night had stirred her more deeply than the most fragrant Spring day. Homeward-bound office people passed in an endless stream, hats bobbing and hips swaying. Sophie slipped into the line. Because she was not going home, she walked slowly and often looked into brightly lighted windows. She was sometimes pushed from the little sidewalk by her fellow pedestrians, but as there is no vehicular traffic in Nassau Street this was not a danger so much as an inconvenience.

Sophie did not look before her into the long, black, wavering chasm of the street, all flashing colored lights near the pavements and above a sombre pattern of yellow squares against black. She was of the tribe of window-gazers, and although the windows of the Nassau Street shops are not attractive, she glanced at each one curiously as she passed; nor did she miss the wares of the sharp-faced young Jews selling ten-cent joke-books, and the old men with the faces of Hebrew prophets who solemnly exhibited trays full of ridiculous toys.

In Nassau Street, almost every other shop-window has a strip of white paper plastered across its front, with the word "Sale!" printed thereon in large red letters. Some of these windows are crowded with men's underwear, each

article bearing a bright-colored price-tag. Others contain pink crêpe-de-chine garments and silk stockings of the opposite sex. Then there are drug-stores which display everything excepting drugs: piles of reprinted fiction marked 45 cents, umbrellas, boxes of candy. Sophie's nose and ears were also assaulted: she passed several lunchrooms, and once a strain or two of a popular fox-trot drifted out of a tiny music store, fascinating and moving because half-heard in the noisy street.

At Ann Street, Sophie stopped at the window of a sporting goods store and critically examined some ice skates.

As she walked on again, her critical faculties continued to function, and instead of idly gazing at the shop windows she examined the people as they passed her. They were of a distinct type, as distinct as the type of the Central European peasant, for instance. Their dress was almost identical, a sort of self-imposed uniform. There was a total lack of that capacity to subtly modify a mode of dress, or even radically to veer away from it, which picks out the individual. The faces were also beginning to take on a certain similarity, of expression, at least. Aside from the Jewish type, which formed more than half of the crowd, another type was forming. All the men had an intense, self-centered look, as if their nerves were overstimulated and their intellects and emotions untouched.

At Park Row, Sophie cut across to Broadway, through the City Hall Park and past the delicate little building planted there. She decided to walk part of the way uptown and then take the Subway to Times Square.

Above Chambers Street, Broadway is badly lighted; a dead spot of factory lofts. Undersized men and girls were coming from the buildings, some remaining at the doorway to talk, while others hurried away, in twos and threes, but never alone. Sophie had the sensation of being lost in a foreign city. She heard no word of English, and the familiar Broadway cars seemed strange in this setting.

She became somewhat tired of the adventure when she reached Spring Street, and quickened her pace, with the intention of taking the Subway at the next express station, which would be Fourteenth Street. Then her eye, automatically looking for shop-windows, caught the name "Waverly Place" at the corner of a building.

In her somewhat emotional mood, there was a romantic flavor to the name that lured her down the dark street. The first novel she had ever read was Scott's "Kennilworth." The book had a green pebbly cover, and the words "Waverly Novels" flowed across the cover in golden script. She was about twelve years old at the time and she could not understand the cause of Amy Robsart's melancholy nor Queen Elizabeth's fits of rage, but her mind had unconsciously soaked up the lush atmosphere of the Elizabethan Age, and the book remained a beautiful, inexplicable experience.

Waverly Place began with lofts and the same black and gold signs she had dimly seen on Broadway. Soon, however, she came upon Washington Square. The surprise delighted her. Bert and she had often spent evenings there; all the tea-rooms were familiar to her. But they had always approached the district from uptown. It was charming to have come there unknowingly, thinking that she had been hopelessly lost among loft buildings and millinery signs. For the first time, Sophie grasped the significance of living in a very large city.

And her place, what was it? Tonight she would think over the problem, alone. She had the impulse to do many things: to write a poem about the city, to speak to a multitude, to love someone very deeply. Walking through the Arch, she felt that she was a triumphal procession.

CHAPTER II

SEVERAL green motor-buses were lined up at the curb, waiting to take people uptown. Sophie hesitated be-

fore one marked "Riverside Drive." It would be nice to walk up the little curving stairs at the back, and sit alone and romantic-appearing on the top, while the bus carried her along Fifth Avenue and to some unknown, unforeseen spot on the Drive.

She wanted to sit on the top, unprotected but warm in her rough old coat, watching people hurrying to dinner appointments or to Subway entrances, her window-trained eyes catching rare colors of oriental rugs, and the gilt frames of solitary paintings in shops and picture galleries as she rolled past. She wanted to pass the Library and from above watch the people as they crawled up the stone steps and looked backward at the soft-colored avenue before they entered. Farther up, there would be brief glimpses of a church and a cathedral, run into window displays in the Japanese style: a bottle of rare essence and a handkerchief, a green feather fan, and a flame-colored dress from France, occupying a whole window. She stood, swaying on one foot. She wanted to sit alone and feel the wind from the river at every crossing.

As she hesitated, a young man crossed in front of her, and under the arc light. He had a thin, inquisitorial face, and the air of Bohemianism that comes with an amply cut, dark overcoat and a black felt hat.

He passed so close to Sophie that she got an odor of cigarettes and cold woolen cloth. His hands were sunk deeply into his coat pockets, and he looked down at the curb. Black lashes showed faintly and childishly on his flat cheekbones.

Sophie's eyes followed him as he walked beyond the fountain. He moved slowly, and with an alien swing. He surprised her by throwing himself on a bench and burying his face in his hands.

Then, without a parting glance at the bus, and turning her back on the neat respectability of the Washington Arch, Sophie deliberately started to walk around the outside of the square, with the intention of finally approaching the

young man's bench from the other direction. She met a number of young people hurrying to classes at the New York University in Waverly Place. Also, people from buses overtook and passed her, mostly young people, too. She knew that they were going to an evening of pleasure: to dance, to drink, to be gay.

She forgot her poem. Her solitary evening had already lost its charm. She wanted to be with a man. She considered for a minute the desirability of telephoning to Bert. He would come and meet her. But she put away the idea almost immediately. The intimacy implied by telephoning him seemed intolerable, disgusting. She shuddered as she thought of his kisses, deliberate, moist things, which she had submitted to so often in the past. No, it was nothing of the past, the thing that she wanted tonight. She breathed deeply of the moist, faintly chill air, and then childishly blew through her rounded mouth to see her breath suspended for a second before her.

She entered the Park again, from the south side, and her heart beat faster as she saw the man still there, almost beneath a small monument. She was annoyed that his face was still sunk in his hands, and she hoped for her own sake that he was not intoxicated: she had gradually formed the intention of making his acquaintance.

As she came nearer to him, she remembered a novel by Sudermann that she had read while at high school. It was full of perversity, and passing from girl to girl, stimulated thought more effectually than the expurgated Greek classic they were studying.

Sophie frankly drew a parallel between her present conduct and the restlessness of the frau in the novel who went forth at night to pick up strange men, thus reversing the usual procedure. But she felt no reason to be ashamed, for from the point of view of an onlooker, her actions so far were quite proper: she could easily have been a girl who lived in the vicinity, taking a stroll in the Square before dinner.

She reassured her slight qualm by reflecting that the German lady went out very late.

She came nearer to the young man, and at last passed directly in front of him. The sharp click of her heels on the pavement made him look up.

Sophie saw this from the corner of her eye. She passed him demurely, hesitated a second, and then chose a bench opposite, but about ten feet beyond him. She did not dare to sit nearer. She settled herself and sunk her face deeper into the fur collar of her coat. She allowed her eyes to wander to the young man. He was sitting up straight now, having changed his position instinctively, as a man will put on a coat when his privacy is violated.

Sophie met his eyes. The Square was well-lighted, and she could see that his eyes were black and had an expression of restless seeking. His look was so sincere and concentrated that she unconsciously gathered herself together, as if in answer to the salute of a friend. But he looked away almost immediately.

Sophie had a secret, but intense admiration for herself; even the introspection of the early evening had not affected her confidence in her personal charm. But she could not mistake his plain gesture of disinterest. In resentment, she would have walked away, but on a second thought she prudently lingered so that her retreat would not be obvious.

A flake of snow fell on her suede glove. As if it had been a signal, she got up and walked over to the young man. She could never explain her action. She had not intended to do this.

Looking up, he saw a female figure, with a prosaic hat and firm chin, who said in an unconvincing, flat voice:

"Pardon me, but are you ill? Can I help you?"

Focusing his black eyes on her, he slightly shook his head saying smoothly:

"Thank you; I'm afraid you couldn't."

His words released her from an enchantment, and as she turned to go, her

relief was so great that she threw back a parting phrase in a more natural voice: "Well, good-bye and good luck to you!"

Sophie's voice was a twentieth century contralto, low, deliberate, with a slight metallic undertone.

He arose impulsively when he heard her voice, saying:

"Do you mind telling me if you represent an uplift institution or whether your solicitude about my welfare is personal—if you are on your own?"

He spoke rapidly, and raised his voice on the last syllables, like an Englishman.

She paused in her flight: "You seemed to be ill—really, I was afraid you were going to shoot yourself, or something." And at his unbelieving smile, she hastened to add: "You were awfully dejected looking."

He seemed profoundly, sincerely shocked, and hastened after her.

"Not dejected! Do you really mean dejected?" he asked anxiously, when he reached her side.

"Absolutely dejected, or I shouldn't have spoken to you," she insisted.

They stood under the monument of Holley.

"Who is this chap, I wonder?" he asked, with the interest of one visiting a strange city.

Together they deciphered the inscription. As he expressed surprise that America had given so modest a memorial to anyone connected with steel, he was noting the defective contour of her cheek.

She answered him by a reminder that the bridges and skyscrapers were monuments, but he ignored her remark, and with an air of abstraction took her bulky, furry arm beneath his and led her along the path.

CHAPTER III

THE snow was falling thickly and the air was milder. Sophie unloosened her collar and opened the front of her coat with her free hand. They kept step, and walked in a silence of the utmost

intimacy. She stole glances at his profile, which reminded her of engravings of the Bourbon kings. She was curious about him, but she asked no questions. She had read enough to be aware of the romanticism of the situation: their utter strangeness to each other; the semi-sylvan setting of the park; his exotic type—and her own mental condition.

She thought it would be a jarring note if she spoke, and yet she was becoming hungry and was wondering what practical plans he would make for the evening. She had accepted him. With a nonchalant flick of her mind, she disposed of all former loves and canceled all the kisses of the past, in preparation for the new adventure. She had at last reached solid ground, she thought, and she was stepping into a strange, new way—a way that had never been trod by her mother. She sighed with satisfaction.

Her companion glanced at his wrist-watch.

"Seven o'clock already! So I was a dejected looking fellow . . . so?" he remarked with an air of half regretful finality.

Sophie laughed. "Yes, I said dejected. You would have preferred me to say 'melancholy,' wouldn't you?"

He turned his eyes on her, surprised at her shrewdness. Then he stopped, in childish surprise.

"So stupid of me . . . I didn't know you were young!"

They faced each other under the arc light at the west entrance to the Square. The snow had brought out the freshness of her complexion. Flakes melted on the pale plane of her chest, and his apathy was shaken by the droop of her full, blue-veined eyelids.

She was also surprised at his appearance in the strong light. He was less conventionally good-looking than she had fancied. His complexion, which had seemed to be pale and clear in the semi-darkness, was in reality a muddy, yellowish brown. His teeth were very white, small, and uneven. His eyes she found more interesting than before.

Beneath them, the flesh was sunken and dark, giving his face a martyr-like, mystic sadness, in sharp contradiction to his cruel little teeth and full nostrils.

At last he removed his eyes from her face, leaving the impression of having taken something away with him.

"We must sit down somewhere; it was awful of me to keep walking around with you. That is what I miss in America—the cafés where one can spend one's unscheduled moments. And as all my moments are unscheduled, I am lost here. There is no provision made for the inactive. But pardon me for tiring you, won't you?"

"You are funny," laughed Sophie. "When you find I am young, you become careful of my comfort, but when you thought I was old and feeble, you walked me at least a couple of blocks."

"Yes, I thought you were at least thirty. You seemed to be a school-teacher looking for an adventure. I don't know why I got that impression. I suppose because you are tall and have a man's hat."

Seeing the shadow cross Sophie's face, he hastened to put her in good humor.

"But your voice fascinated me in spite of everything else," he added. "It was just to hear your voice that I talked with you. And tonight I am very lucky because you prove to be young, and decidedly not a school-teacher, I am sure. So don't be unhappy about it."

It had been what he said about the adventure that had hurt Sophie, because of its truth. His slight sneer had made her ashamed of looking for an adventure.

"I said, don't be unhappy; you have no reason for it."

With a shake of her head, Sophie silently disagreed with him. He gathered her together with his strong black eyes:

"Really unhappy—you! Quite impossible! Only ugly women are ever thoroughly unhappy."

His compliment pleased her, although she pretended to ignore it.

"Yes, honestly, that is why I came

here alone, because I was unhappy." She vindicated her respectability and drove home her point with the one statement.

"Pardon me, but I think you should reverse your statement: you are unhappy because you came alone. And tonight you are going to allow me to make you very happy. First, we'll have some dinner, and while we eat I'll listen to why you think you're unhappy."

"All right," she agreed, "but you must tell me why you were so—melancholy."

He did not answer. He removed his eyes from her face, and she felt as if she had been tossed out of a net. Then he asked her for a preference of a restaurant, and when she suggested that they go where he usually dined, he took her arm again and they crossed the slippery Square and walked down toward Sixth Avenue.

The ground was covered with snow now, and her heels were padded with it.

Suddenly, she remembered the completion of the mysterious sentence which she had spoken that evening. It was: "It is true; I have found love." She thought, "So this is love!" much as Americans say, "So this is Paris!"

After they had crossed Sixth Avenue he spoke: "It is up brownstone steps, but don't think it's a table d'hôte den—it's rather good."

"Yes?" she answered vaguely.

"So you know the place. Varesi's?" She shook her head.

"I've always eaten there, since I have been in the United States. They keep a table for myself and two friends, in the European manner."

"You are all foreigners?"

"Not exactly. One of the friends is from Missouri and the other's from Virginia. They are studying at Columbia now, but they have both lived abroad. I used to be friendly with one of them when I was in Vienna."

She listened to the history of the two friends with little interest.

"And you?" she asked. "You are Spanish, aren't you?"

His saturnine face blazed with pleasure.

"How did you know it?" he cried, in childish delight.

She was surprised at his reaction to her trivial remark.

"You look Spanish, of course; you speak like an Englishman, but you look Spanish."

"And some people say I look like an Italian—or a Jew!"

She sympathized: "Not really!"

"But, of course, they were elevator boys and—manicure girls. On the contrary, I have heard people in the theatres and the opera make the remark, 'I think he must be Spanish,' or 'There goes a Spaniard.'"

"Oh, you are typically Spanish; your eyes and your—clothes. But how do you use such good English?"

"My mother is English and my father Spanish—a Castilian from Valladolid. He was a consul in London, and I was educated there as a boy. Since then, of course, I have traveled in many countries. . . . But it pleases me to be recognized as a Spaniard. It is a childish thing, but I like to come from the only romantic country left in the world."

They stopped at a three-story and basement cream-colored brick house. Several automobiles and taxi-cabs stood at the door, and the windows of the basement and parlor floors were brightly lighted. Sophie suddenly felt the need for hot food and a warm room.

The narrow hall was crowded with people coming in and going out, and as they stood in line at the check-room the Spaniard peered into the dining-room.

"My friends aren't here yet," he said, "But tonight I don't care."

"You aren't very loyal," chided Sophie.

She spoke absently, for she was scrutinizing his general appearance without the hat and overcoat. He had a black suit of some smooth material, and his linen seemed whiter than any white she had ever seen. This effect was probably caused by the blackness

of his clothes and the swarthiness of his complexion. But it made him look like a Whistler etching. His hair was almost black, brushed back smoothly, and allowed to grow in oblong patches in front of his ears. And then there was the white of his teeth. When he gave his hat to the check girl, Sophie noticed that his hands were long and of a beautiful dark ivory color, much lighter than the skin of his face.

"I am not loyal?" He was surprised. "But I go with men only when I have no woman—and although my friends are Anglo-Saxon and consequently not at all frank, I know they feel that way too. We never discuss anything of importance but women . . . which is absolutely dull, in a city filled with actual women in the flesh. And so, when the reality comes—well, one of us is missing that night."

A waiter interrupted them and they were placed at a corner table for two. The dining-room was square and high-ceilinged, and very noisy.

She shrugged out of her coat before he had a chance to help her. He was disappointed, for he had wanted to put his hands on her shoulders. Her voice excited him. It was a modern voice, as representative of the day as were the simple lines of her dress, and her firm waist. He fancied he could see the muscles move beneath her close satin girdle, as she leaned back to arrange the coat over the back of her chair.

They ordered without much thought.

"It would be nice if we could have a cocktail, wouldn't it?" she sighed, looking into her consommé.

The Spaniard called the waiter, who seemed to recognize him, for a Clover Club and a Martini soon appeared. He sipped his indifferently, accustomed to the wines of Malaga and Jerez, but she liked the pungent taste of her drink.

Sophie was sensitive to the effect of alcohol, and she became talkative. She told her companion about the broken engagement with Bert. He tried to find out everything about her relations with Bert, but she was not really muddled by the cocktail and refused to answer

his questions. The inhibition on her tongue was merely loosened.

With glistening eyes and smiling mouth she expressed her admiration for the Spaniard's coat and hat, and confessed that she had wanted to know him from the first moment she saw him. All this chatter was a deliberate barrage to protect her deeper feelings as for the man, by the time they had reached the dessert, he gave up the attempt to classify her. French and Spanish women are witty, but they are never facetious. He had never before met a girl who was facetious. Before knowing her, he would have said that such a turn of mind must certainly be the death of emotion. Yet her jocularly seemed as much an expression of sex as her curved back. He was shaken with a perverse desire to make her cry out in pain. To hide his eyes from her, he wrote his name—Phillip Pizarro de Alba—on the menu. To his surprise, the lids of her eyes became reddened by quick tears.

"Pizarro! I've always liked him. I think he was quite the most enchanting man in history. And the cruel Duke of Alba! You have a gorgeous name."

"So you know the names?"

Again her shrewdness stung him: "I suppose you had just decided that I was a waitress on a spree."

She wrote her name in a heavy vertical hand, beneath his small, extremely sloping script, with its enormous capitals and inflated loops.

"It doesn't mean anything, but it happens I am not a waitress—I'm a stenographer."

The waiter cleared off the table and presented the check.

"What shall we do—stay here for a while or go some place to dance?" asked Pizarro.

"I really should go home," she murmured.

"Oh, it's only nine," he argued, looking at his wristwatch. "And we haven't exchanged confidences yet. Let's go from here, and decide where we will go next."

She let him help her with her coat.

She did not realize that her face was burning until she struck the cold air. It had stopped snowing and was much colder.

"Pardon," Pizarro flung over his shoulder, as he ran down the steps before her and got a taxi. "All right! Careful, the steps are slippery."

CHAPTER IV

ALMOST before she knew it, Sophie was sitting beside him in the cab.

"But where are we going—?" she began, as the machine started with a jerk.

"Don't think about anything," he whispered, and he took her in his arms and kissed her more expertly than she had ever been kissed.

She struggled away silently, but with all the strength of her body, while he vainly sought her lips again.

He laughed sharply. "Oh, you are impossible. I must kiss you, though."

But instead of making another effort, he drew away from her and put his head in his hands, as he had done in the Square.

She looked at him sidewise, planning just what to do. The taxicab rolled along, she knew not where. She straightened her hat mechanically, and powdered her face from the puff in her hand-bag.

He took off his hat. "Please, just put your hand on my forehead, just for a second."

She hesitated, because it was a difficult thing to do gracefully, as his head was on a level with hers.

"Don't be so hard," he begged. "Say something; anything." She was silent.

"Rica!" he muttered in Spanish, and drew her to him, crushing her painfully. She remembered her obligation to struggle—but remained passive. She could see his dark forehead and black brows, for as a last small protest she kept her eyes open. He slipped one hand around her and it felt hot against her back, suffusing her entire body with a pleasant, somnolent warmth. With his

other hand, he held both of her wrists with a firmness that completely satisfied her, really.

Suddenly, her heart began to beat so violently that she thought she was becoming ill. Her head felt empty and unstable. It seemed to have floated up near the roof of the cab, and to be looking down at her body in lewd mockery.

He kissed her neck at the ear, and then her lips again. Suddenly he felt sharp teeth bite down on his upper lip. He drew back from her quickly, wiping away some blood with his handkerchief.

"See what you've done?" he demanded, showing the spotted handkerchief. "Don't you know that I may be poisoned from that bite?"

Sophie drew a sharp breath. She was sorry to see the blood. She stood up and fumbled at the cab door. Her head ached and her legs trembled. Pizarro, who was still mopping his lip, pulled her back violently.

"Just a minute, please," he ordered, sullenly.

"Oh, all right! But I hope we are going some place near the subway." And she added, "I think you are insulting, Mr. Pizarro." Her voice trembled.

He felt carefully of his lip and examined the blood stain on his handkerchief, holding it near the window.

She laughed contemptuously: "Oh, you act as if it were a hemorrhage!"

His face was impassive, and he was silent.

She noticed that his neck was muscular and as strong in appearance as bronze, although his chest was hollow and his shoulders not much broader than hers.

She rubbed away the steam on the window and saw that they were going through a Park. She turned to him in exasperation:

"Please let us have a truce for a minute. Is this Central or Bronx Park?"

She was not angry any more, for his position was too patently foolish. The dangerous wave had passed over

both of them, and now they were left high and dry, safe, but untidy and uncomfortable, and with a stinging consciousness of anti-climax.

"It is Ninety-sixth Street, I think," he answered, as they swung out of the Park. "Central Park."

He signaled to the driver and they stopped. He helped her out and paid the man. It had become very cold, and he was shivering in his romantic coat, which seemed to invite all the winds of New York.

"There doesn't seem to be any Subway," she remarked, to say something.

He shrugged his shoulders, as if with deliberate insult:

"All New York people are so: they expect to see a Subway kiosk spring up like a mushroom on any corner where they happen to be standing."

She knew that his remark was a bitter indictment of her very being.

He took her arm perfunctorily and they crossed the street. She was slightly disappointed that he had not tried to kiss her as they stood at the Park entrance. There had been no one around. She was tempted to kiss him herself. She imagined the sensation she would get by putting her arm about his smooth neck. She furiously curbed her imagination and tried to despise him.

She had many reasons to despise him. For instance, it was not nice that he had abandoned the taxi-cab so promptly. He should have kept up a polite pretense, and brought her home, instead of turning her out into the cold. And there was his anger at the bitten lip, and his cry of pain: not admirable in a man, certainly.

During the walk to Broadway, he grumbled at the cold. He had never felt such cold as this of New York, he said. Vienna was cold, certainly, but there one always had the cafés, which were very warm and gay. But here, people were too fond of fresh air. And there was the lack of music. Music kept one warm. . . . He asked her what the people did to keep comfortable in New York.

"They stay at home—and our houses

are very warm," she replied when he paused long enough to give her a chance to speak.

"Precisely. London again. And that is the secret of the philosophy of 'Home, Sweet Home,' which we have no word to represent in Spanish. It is a result of cold streets, a lack of cafés, and prohibition. Where else can the people go when they can't pay three dollars for a theatre ticket?"

She ignored his pettishness as if he had been a child and advised him to walk more quickly and to breathe deeply. "All you do is to shiver and gasp. No wonder you feel cold. Walk with a free movement of your body, as I do, and breathe as if you were swimming—rhythmically, you know."

"Thanks for your advice," he returned sardonically, without changing his posture. "But I prefer the heat of civilization."

At that moment, a particularly vicious gust of wind came up the street, and he turned on Sophie with a ferocity that frightened her.

"You are quite as cold as that wind! But no, your coldness is not even as clean as the wind. It is as obnoxious as that dirty snow in the gutter. I am thinking of the English girl, and from my experience with you I think that Americans are in the same category."

"Of course, you are a man and want everything that happens to appeal to you for the moment," she defended. "If a woman thwarts you, why, you call her the worst thing you can think of—obnoxious. It isn't fair."

He interrupted her quietly.

"I don't think you are quite following me. I am not talking about what happened in the taxicab: I am thinking of how very unsympathetic and hard your whole attitude toward me is. You haven't a single romantic thought about me. You think of me as a strange intruder in your life, and watch me closely lest I should steal some of the silver, tolerating me only as a diversion, and as someone who will pay for your amusement. . . . Oh, of course you are disgusted! I shouldn't mention such

vulgaries; but I shall mention just what occurs to me, American men notwithstanding."

Sophie was thoughtful. She was surprised that she did not laugh when he accused her of not having a romantic thought toward him. He evidently thought that it was a woman's duty to have romantic thoughts toward men. On the surface, this idea was funny, but there was something beneath the surface that made her curious.

"Tell me about other women—women of other nationalities, I mean," she demanded.

"Well . . . the Latin women are treacherous and uncultured, perhaps, but they are warm-hearted; they don't wait for a man to kiss them, if you understand. They try to arouse love. They are amusing—the French, that is—but not too amusing. The Germans are perhaps a little silly, but sometimes their sentimentality is charming. And they have kind hearts." He laughed, as if at some pleasant memory.

She shifted her mind into step with his as gracefully as she would have followed his feet in dancing. Although she didn't speak, he understood by the gentle pressure of her hand on his coat sleeve that she followed him mentally, and in gratitude his face softened and he actually patted her hand.

"How is your lip?" she ventured, with some levity, as they went into the Subway at Ninety-sixth Street. She noticed that the cold air had stopped the blood.

He refused to discuss his wound, and by his eyes she could see that he did not forgive the bite.

He answered her lightly, however: "How are your feelings?"

"I find it easy to forgive—too easy," she answered.

"I find it difficult to forgive an unkindness. I know I am too hard, but. . . ."

She turned upon him furiously: "And you were not unkind to me?"

"No, I can't admit that. I think if I were a woman I should feel happy if a man kissed me."

"Why, that's the commonest thing in the world!" she answered too quickly.

"Ah, you have found it common? It is true, then, that even kisses are produced in quantity in the United States. But mine are imported and may be more valuable."

She could have replied in kind, but shrugging her shoulders, she mentally dismissed him.

CHAPTER IV

WHEN they had boarded an express train, she was conscious of a mental and physical weariness, amounting almost to exhaustion. It seemed as if they had walked miles and lived several years, since she had so naïvely appropriated him in the Square.

They sat without speaking, in the glaring white light of the train. From a station clock she saw that it was half-past ten. She wondered, for the first time that evening, what her mother would say, and what Bert's thoughts were. She gave fleeting side glances at Pizarro. Decidedly, he was bilious looking. He seemed to be in an abominable humor. She knew that he had thrown her from his net, quite deliberately, and was not watching to see if she had crawled away.

They came to the end of the Subway line in Brooklyn, and left the train, still without speaking.

He followed her up the stairs to the street, and she wished that she had worn her new winter suit instead of the old fur coat.

"I look like a chauffeur," she was thinking, walking with as much dignity as possible, while the coat swung about her and exhibited its loathsome hair. The grosgrain band of her hat was spotted, too, she remembered. She felt his eyes on the precise spot.

When they were in the street, he looked about him curiously. "So this is Brooklyn! Rather depressing, isn't it? Why do so many people live here?"

"Because it's Brooklyn," she snapped. "I go up here."

She pointed to the overhanging Ele-

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vated structure. He followed her up the stairs.

"Is it very far—your home?" he asked, when they had reached the dingy waiting-room, with its red-hot stove and odor of stale cigarettes. She felt it unbearable to wait with a man in such a place, and she walked out on the cold platform. He followed her, and asked the question again.

"Yes, awfully far, and it isn't at all necessary for you to come," she answered.

"But, really, I may as well go. I have nothing to do but to go to sleep. Still, perhaps, if your home is very far—" He paused and looked at her wistfully. "I could get a train to 103rd Street here, couldn't I? And I live up there. It might be more convenient for me to leave you now."

She wanted to push him from the platform onto the tracks.

"Oh, I hate you!" she muttered.

Her train came before he could answer her, and she boarded it without thinking he would follow. He followed her, however, and with the air of a martyr. The ride was a nightmare. They were silent, like two creatures on whom had fallen a disenchantment. He spoke only to say that his feet were cold, and she refused to answer.

She bitterly regretted her tolerance in remaining with him after what had happened. She reflected that this must be the humiliation that is supposed to fall on the head of the woman who compromises with conventionality. She had had other such experiences and she had in every case been sincerely indignant, and had fled without parley. But with this man she had actually argued.

Her indignation increased rapidly. She should have called a policeman, she reflected. She should have run away from him, at the very least. How delicious to have the minute over again, and to scratch his face, as well as bite his lip! She regretted that she hadn't bitten deeper. She tried to forget that she had almost apologized for her violence.

She knew that the bright light was

not kind to her unveiled face, and that she needed powder on her nose. She mentally protested against the terrific odds which New York girls must face in the way of a background. How can a woman be charming in an Elevated train?

When they reached her street, she lightly touched his arm.

"This is the end," said Sophie, and he followed her down the stairs.

When they reached the street, she was trembling with distaste for the whole adventure. The night had become cold, and the corner where they stood was unprotected. A bitter wind swept upon them from a vacant lot.

There was an awkward pause.

"Perhaps you had better take the train here, without walking down with me. Just go up these stairs and cross over to the other side. The train will be marked 'Park Row.' Or you could change at the Subway station to the Interborough, the way we came."

"When shall we meet again—to-morrow?"

His suggestion astonished her.

"Never!" she answered, decidedly.

"Please, I want to see you again. You are so very beautiful now. In the car, I thought, 'What a hideous girl; commonplace, awful!' But now . . . now you are beautiful. You are like a blonde Salomé."

She smiled indifferently and began to walk down the street to her home. He accompanied her. The Butler house was of the American rococo period, but in the moonlight its meaningless points and scrolls were almost fantastic. They stood at the little iron garden gate.

"Tomorrow?" he persisted, his face pale and good-looking for the moment.

She shook her head.

His eyes tried to arouse her. "But why? Only tell me why?"

"Run home—I must go in."

"Is it because of what happened in the taxi?"

They both smiled, for the taxi seemed to have been the pivot about which the disastrous events of the evening swung.

After the smile, she had to answer him.

"Mainly, yes," she admitted.

"Now be a little *more* frank," he continued, quickly following up his advantage, "and confess that you are angry at me because we didn't stay in the taxi longer—or rather, because I brought you home in the Subway. Am I right?"

She nodded her head.

"I assure you that I am sorry for my thoughtlessness. It was just that—thoughtlessness. I forgot I was with an American girl. And I was angry at you, too. But it is such a little thing. If you could forgive me—"

She interrupted him: "I was too tired to explain everything. You were horrid in the car coming home, too. You were so fussy about your feet being cold."

He laughed gleefully: "Oh, how much of a woman you are! More, more emotion. That is all you live for, is it not?" He leaned very close to her.

She was confused: "But honestly, I was angry about what you did. How you acted. In itself, I mean. . . . I don't want to pretend to be very sophisticated, but one must draw the line somewhere, and I am consistent about my particular line."

An expression in his dark eyes made her realize that she had been coarse.

"You mean that your real reason for wanting to end our friendship is because I had been inexcusably familiar, and you feel that you cannot allow the thing to progress any farther?"

"Yes." In reality, she didn't know whether this was her reason or not.

"Now, what would you say if I told you that I am going to Europe in ten days? If you knew for a certainty that I would be out of your life in ten days, would you have dinner with me to-morrow?"

"Tell me, first, why do you wish to have dinner with me?"

"To prove I am not an animal, and because I am writing a book about women, and you are the first modern one I have met."

"I—a modern woman!" She was interested immediately.

"Yes, modern in your intensity of life. But will you dine with me to-morrow?"

"How can I refuse? If I say 'No,' you will have to find another modern woman."

"And why not lunch and dine?"

"Not quite; but I could meet you at three, say."

"Where?"

"How about the Library on Fifth Avenue? It is central, and warm."

"Then the Circulating Library. At the stone benches by the door, because there isn't any place to sit down inside."

"Very well, then, at three," she agreed. "Now I must go. Good night." She put out her gloved hand.

He pressed it against his lips. "And you will not think badly of me tonight?"

"No, I'll forget all about the taxicab," she promised, really forgiving him everything because he had kissed her hand.

"Oh, don't *forget* about it," he begged earnestly. "And I really don't want to see you again because you are modern."

She freed her hand and ran up the slippery walk, laughing.

As she opened the unlatched door, she stole a look back, and saw that he was walking rapidly away, his romantic coat flapping against his slender legs.

* * *

Her mother met her at the top of the stairs, shivering in a flannel nightgown, and smelling of sleep. In a whisper, she asked Sophie where she had been. Sophie turned on the light in the bathroom and as her mother blinked from the doorway, told her that the evening had been spent with an old school chum who had telephoned to the office.

"I didn't think of 'phoning," she went on, glibly, as she let the water run in the tub, "because I didn't realize that it was so late. But we took our time over dinner and then went into a picture show. . . ."

Then, as an afterthought, she added: "I hope Bert wasn't awfully sore."

"He seemed worried about what was detaining you," said Mrs. Butler, blinking her weak eyes. "He looked very nice: he had a new overcoat. One of those fuzzy ones. He finally went off alone, after waiting for a 'phone call until he was tired."

"I think I'll can him," yawned Sophie. "It doesn't get you anywhere, floating about with fellows of that kind."

"It gets you married," said her mother, absently scratching her abdomen. She was rarely so direct.

"That's just my idea of nowhere to get—to marry Bert."

Balancing herself on the end of the tub, Sophie was unlacing her high shoes. Her legs swelled delicately from above the ankles, and the bent knees were perfectly round.

"I always thought that Bert and you—" began her mother. Then she stopped. After a short silence, Mrs. Butler disappeared in the dark hall to her bedroom.

CHAPTER V

THE next morning Sophie got up earlier than usual. From her frosty window she could see the cold sunshine that was out of doors, and an irritable wind blew snow powder against the window-pane. She dressed carefully in the best things she had.

In the dining-room, a little later, she drank her coffee and buttered a roll while her mother made sandwiches for her little brother's school lunch. The room was in its customary morning disorder. Evening papers were scattered about the floor, and the shades were drawn unevenly. There was a mingled odor of her father's pipe and coal gas from the hot-air furnace. Sophie looked with distaste at where her father had eaten his breakfast, a half hour before.

Mrs. Butler made a small package of Jimmie's sandwiches, and then spoke: "Bert felt badly about last night."

Her voice was confidential and her narrow face slightly flushed. She al-

ways found it difficult to discuss matters of sex. Sophie had never heard her use the word "love." She invariably said that people "thought a lot of each other." She sat down and kept her eyes on the girl's face with what Sophie thought of as a pointy look.

Sophie buttered another roll that she didn't want. She hated to think that her mother was cognizant of any of her experiences. She hated even more to think that her mother had ever touched upon the question herself.

Mrs. Butler went on placidly: "Of course he was disappointed. He is a young fellow with a lot of—"

Sophie interrupted. "Naturally he was disappointed. But I hadn't seen Mildred for such an age, and one thing led to another, and before I knew it, going home in time to meet him was out of the question." She spoke merely to drag the conversation from the plane of sentiment.

Mrs. Butler's eyes became more pointy, and she smiled with wavering archness:

"Bert thinks a lot of you, Sophie."

"You mean he's in love with me?"

Sophie spoke as prosaically as possible.

"I mean he thinks of you as the girl he would like to marry." Mrs. Butler's voice sounded as solemn as if she were reading the marriage service.

"Well, he'd better get that idea out of his head," shrugged Sophie.

"Now, Sophie, be careful. You know that young men are—"

Mrs. Butler paused, embarrassed, with the air of wanting to impart some delicate truth.

Sophie watched her with bright, cruel eyes.

Mrs. Butler's face was very thin, but unwrinkled, and her hair was as bright as Sophie's. Her lips were invisible in the general sallowness of her face, and her eyes looked like little pieces of new tin. It was impossible to realize that she had ever been a young mother. She seemed to have congealed while in the virgin state.

Sophie had often tried to imagine the progress of her parents' love entangle-

ment. She could imagine her mother being sentimental, and allowing her cheek to be kissed; standing before a priest and extending her hand for the marriage ring; but she could not succeed in applying the definite state of marriage to her mother's being.

Mrs. Butler reddened under the stare of Sophie's bright green eyes, as Sophie intended she should. It was not the first time that the daughter had taken advantage of her mother's prudery. However, this time Mrs. Butler was not to be put off. She took a furtive breath and started again:

"There are a great many things you don't understand, daughter. That you couldn't understand as you are. Seeing a young man so often makes him think of things that you wouldn't dream of, because you are not married. You—"

Sophie was horribly ashamed. She could have cried for sheer annoyance and shame. Shame for her mother.

She pushed away her coffee and got up from the table, suppressing the words that were in her mind: "Oh, mother, you're about five years too late!" She shrank even from this slight contact.

On her way to Manhattan, Sophie reflected that anything her mother touched lost some of its joy and beauty. As she was putting her hat and coat on, her mother had asked her if she would be home for dinner. . . . And there had been the necessity of explaining the situation without making it appear that she had been with him the evening before. After all, it had been a silly lie. She felt that she should be much happier, on her way to erase the impression of the marmot coat, and to conquer. This morning she wore a suit which was fur-trimmed, expensive.

The Subway was warm. Sophie stood in a corner, accurately fitted between two other bodies. She thought of Pizarro's kiss until her head became dizzy and she swayed gently against the gray overcoat in back of her. It was true that he would go from her life in a few days. At least the kiss would remain, a mark for others. She tried to

visualize Pizarro's successor, but she could not connect the kiss she had in mind with a mouth that was not small and perverse. And a dark, sloping forehead was the very essence of the kiss, as the color of the sky flavors a day.

She entered the building where her office was directly from the Subway, without the necessity of going into the street. She was glad, for she felt a new distaste for the cold winter air.

She worked all morning, and then asked permission to be free for the rest of the day. Permission was granted, as a matter of course.

At precisely three o'clock she was at the meeting place. One bench was entirely vacant and the other was occupied by a white-haired man and two young girls. She waited until she felt the cold of the marble through her single skirt. People passed constantly, and although she kept her eyes glued on the revolving doors, Pizarro did not come. She decided to wait with quiet dignity until ten minutes after three, and then go.

Two minutes before the time limit, the Spaniard burst through the revolving doors, and catching sight of the quiet figure on the marble bench, he rushed over to her.

"Oh, thank you for waiting! It was dreadful, coming here. At Fifth Avenue there was a confusion—a complication of the traffic—and I was delayed five minutes."

This time, he seemed less attractive. Perhaps her memories had paled the reality. His small dark face was pinched with the cold, and his voice was so high as to sound almost hysterical.

Sophie gave him her hand with an air of reserve, and they both sat down again. In a minute, he had regained the composure that she liked.

"You are different today—very different," he remarked, his eyes examining her hat and the lines of her suit.

"Nicer?" she asked with automatic coquetry.

His reply was surprising and unpleasant.

"No. Smarter, of course, but not so

disturbing as you were last night. You are the typical New York girl today, impermeable, and of a hard and bright exterior."

"Yesterday you said that I was quite awful. Am I worse today?" She was not offended at being accused of having a hard and bright exterior, but she had intended to be disturbing.

He leaned over to look in her eyes.

"Last night you were wonderful; I shall never forget how wonderful you were last night."

"But you didn't act as if I were very wonderful—or precious," she murmured, unsteadily.

His voice was less steady than hers.

"At the moment, one cannot understand. Afterward I knew, when I was alone. It is so, unfortunately, with me: the present, the reality, I want to take, to destroy, to use. But the past and the future I dream of. I am an enemy to reality. I have something in me of Don Quixote."

She hid a smile. It was funny that he should speak of himself so enthusiastically. He was quite satisfied to be an enemy of reality.

He did not see her too demure mouth and shining, amused eyes.

"And now shall we have tea—if you have lunched?"

They both stood up. She said that she had already lunched, but would like tea.

* * *

They left the Library and turned into Fifth Avenue. They chose the first tea-room they came to, and found a table in a corner. It was deliciously warm, and the light of a pink shaded lamp enmeshed them. She removed her coat, and through her gauzy blouse the man could see that she was thin, but small-boned, and that her flesh was of delicate texture.

She could well understand the advantage of being with him in such a place: the feminine background, the limited intimacy. She wished only for music. She was careful to keep their conversation on general topics. It excited her profoundly to sit opposite him, the table

between, all the world at their elbows, and to remember the brief intimacy of the night before. She spoke of the current plays, the American literature of the day, and of New York. He answered her wittily, showing a broader and a deeper knowledge of the city and its affairs than hers, and quite incidentally finding out her position in New York.

In return, he told her that his parents were in Spain, and that he was in America studying at Columbia, with a fellowship from the Spanish Government. His interest in traveling for its own sake surprised Sophie. Living all her life in a large seaport, traveling had always seemed to her to be a purely incidental procedure; but he made a philosophy, a religion of it. He spoke of having lived in London, Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. His strange passion for mobility led him to make childish remarks, such as, "I have been in every large city in the world, now that I have come to New York. I have been all over Europe, except Russia, and I hope to go there very soon."

She ate her cinnamon toast in silence.

"And now are you not sorry that you refused to kiss me?" he asked her suddenly, taking quick advantage of her lowered guard.

"But why—why should I be sorry now?" The first two words were too prosaic, she thought, and she added the rest of the sentence as an æstheticism, a subtle deference to his expectations.

"To be my New York experience," he told her, trying to coax more tea from the Dresden pot.

She laughed aloud, and he was offended.

"And now I must go back to Spain, and perhaps an experience I will find there will be the last, for some years, at least."

She could not decide whether he was naively vain, or deeply cynical.

"And when do you sail?" Her voice was conventional.

He ignored her question, and continued as though she had not spoken.

"I think the real love of my life is

in Bohemia, or perhaps in Vienna at this moment—but if I send her a cable she will be in Spain when I arrive."

Naturally she was resentful that he discussed another woman with her. In the rose-colored light he was very good-looking. She liked his hands—hands made for a purpose, she thought, with American utilitarianism. He was smoking a fragrant Egyptian cigarette he had taken from a little red box. He was extraordinarily boyish, with a small, smooth head and feminine eyelashes. Only his hands were mature, and perhaps his eyes. Yes, his eyes were sophisticated, she decided. He was perhaps a small boy, but a bad one.

"Is she German?" inquired Sophie, raising invisible eyebrows. Her voice trilled on the word, expressing fatness, placidity, grossness.

He appreciated her meaning, but answered with apparent innocence.

"No, she is a Bohemian. A Czech, not a Teuton. More like a Russian than a German. Her mother was Jewish, but the girl is typically Russian in appearance—slight, delicate, with a somewhat broad face. Yet the face has a subtle delicacy. She often looks like the Venus of Giorgione. And her eyes are the saddest I have ever seen."

"Yes, that is possible. After what those people have suffered because of the war." Sophie hated to think that he meant poetically, spiritually sad.

"No," corrected Pizarro. "I haven't seen her since the war. She was always sad. It is a part of her Slav temperament."

"You haven't seen her since 1914?"

He bowed his head.

"I haven't seen her for six years. I have been trying to forget her, but it has been impossible."

"If you love her, why do you want to forget her?"

"I don't want to love her. I want to be free, to have many more loves, to travel eternally."

The passion in his voice kept the smile from her mouth.

"And the girl?"

"Yes, I have been cruel to her." He

dropped his eyes. Sophie thought at first that he was looking down in shame, but it was only to extract another cigarette from the little red box.

"Will you please tell me about her?" asked Sophie. "I should like to know about the whole thing, if you don't mind telling."

He smiled at her. "And you promise not to laugh, shining, hard American girl?"

She flushed at the warmth of his eyes, and answered him with a serious shake of her head.

"Well, I met her in Vienna. She was a modiste's girl. Trimmed ladies' hats, you know. They are a class like the grisettes of Paris. She came from a little village in Bohemia, where her father had a garden."

"A farm, you mean," corrected Sophie.

"A flower farm, if you will. He raised flowers for the perfumers. Not cabbages or potatoes. She left her home in the country to go to Vienna. First she had been in Prague, where she learned to make hats, and had a complicated life, I imagine. After a year she came to Vienna, where her life was also complicated."

Sophie liked his use of the word "complicated" instead of "unconventional." It carried with it a vague perfume, and made her envy the girl her complications.

"Complicated because of you?" Sophie wished him to know that she understood his meaning.

"No, things had happened to her before she knew me. I never knew all; she was reserved about some things."

Sophie could not resist a feminine thrust.

"Girls are always reserved about those things, aren't they?"

"About the *things* she was very truthful. It was only that she did not explain her motives. Perhaps she could not. Who knows? Only one instinctively knew that they could not be the usual motives—sensuality, laziness—for she was not a usual girl. At least, so I think. I am perhaps foolishly mis-

taken. Perhaps she is only a woman, after all."

He stopped, lost in the maze of his doubts.

Sophie called back his attention.

"She was really truthful? That's rather unusual."

"You shall judge for yourself. I will tell you everything. I met her one winter night. It was during the first week of my stay in Vienna. I was studying at the University, really studying, because I was quite serious and naive then. I was lonesome and knew no one, except a few professors and an ugly Hungarian girl who was attending medical lectures.

"One night, after listening to music in a café and drinking coffee for two or three hours, I left the place in desperation. I walked the streets for almost an hour. I wanted to meet a girl. Then I saw the Bohemian walking in front of me. She was very like a child. Tall, but slim and straight, and she walked with little even steps. I followed her, overtook her, and spoke to her in bad German. At first she would not answer me, but at last she did. I asked her to come to a café, and we went to a quiet one. I was enchanted to find that she was pretty. White and delicate, with a round, soft face, and very white hands."

"And she sewed?"

"I only know that to me her hands seemed white and tender. At first I thought she was a refined street girl, but soon I knew I was mistaken. We talked of books and music. She sang things of Debussy in a low voice. She liked Schnitzler so much—it was she who told me of him—and she had read many French and English things: Remy de Gourmont, Oscar Wilde, George Moore. And she knew all the Russians— But I am boring you?"

"Oh, no! Please tell me the rest of it."

"She said that she was unhappy; that her life in Vienna was sad. She had just been put out of her cousin's house, where she had been living since coming to Vienna. The cousin loved her, and

his wife discovered it and put the girl out. So I took the poor one to her new room, in a dreadful part of Vienna, and she allowed me to see her the next day."

"About the cousin," interrupted Sophie. "Did she love him? And didn't he defend her?"

"I don't think she loved him. It was perhaps only perversity. She was very perverse. She did many things of that sort—things that hurt no one but herself. One day she told me that she had stolen a very beautiful flower from her shop. They looked for it all over, and then, after a week, the girl confessed that she had taken it, and gave it back. She was a Czech and difficult to understand."

"And the next day, what happened? Did you see her again?"

"Oh, yes, we met in a garden—a park you would call it. One of the many beautiful parks in Vienna. She was waiting in the cold for me there. She had no work at the time, and was really starving, although I did not suspect. We went into a conservatory where there was an exhibition of flowers. At that hour there were but a few people looking at the flowers. I remember, she said very sadly, 'Beautiful things come too late.' And suddenly, as we were passing some rose-trees, she put her arms around my neck and kissed me."

"Before you kissed her?"

"Yes. Was it not beautiful? The most beautiful memory of my life. I was talking of my studies in the University. I had not thought of kissing her, although the place was warm and it was a good opportunity. It was just pleasant to watch her mouth and eyes. But suddenly she kissed me."

He looked at Sophie intently.

"Well, let's go before we're put out," said Sophie with abrupt gayety, standing up so quickly that she almost overturned the little gilt chair.

He hastened to help her on with her coat, and then paid the check while she arranged her veil with nervous fingers.

On Fifth Avenue again, they walked uptown. The sun was not as warm as before, yet it was soft, and the wind

had died down entirely. They were exactly the same height, and walked in step.

"It is too late to go to a theater," he said, when they had reached Fiftieth Street.

"I like to walk," answered Sophie. "Let's walk to the Plaza."

CHAPTER VI

ALL afternoon they walked until a chill breeze made them aware of the end of the day. They walked briskly, the wind wrapping Sophie's skirt about her legs, and Pizarro's soft hat flapping over his eyes.

It was the intimate hour before darkness. They stopped often to look in shop windows, and Sophie was delighted to know that he was even quicker than she to note the subtlety of a line in a hat, or the vulgarity of a color combination. Like all middle-class American women, she pretended to call a man's æstheticism "effeminate" when applied to women's clothes; but actually it delighted her.

When he showed her that he expected they would dine together, she did not dissent. It pleased her that she was to spend more time with him. She had the sensation of being lost in a grotesque maze. She felt there was a word, a thought (or perhaps a color) that would magically straighten the labyrinth and set her before a convenient, though cunningly hidden, door. She felt that if she left him without discovering the secret charm she would be lost forever.

"There is a good French restaurant in Fifty-first Street," he said, after they had walked a block in silence.

As they passed one of the gaudy hotels, a woman was getting out of a purple limousine. For an instant they were enveloped in her pungent scent.

Pizarro turned his head to look back at her.

"She is a living sermon on the futility of the serious-minded woman."

His words were cold, but there was a warmth in his eyes that angered

Sophie. She was too clever, and too proud, to classify herself by a defence of the serious-minded woman. His next remark, however, shook her self-control:

"To me, that is the only reason for a man's striving for material opulence—to have women of that kind: the most elegant of their type."

At his words, Sophie stood still, a picture of outraged sentiment. Her cheeks were pink from the cold, and her hair was plastered in metallic wisps beneath the tight veil.

He laughed and took her arm, saying, "Have my unholy words turned you to stone?"

"You are the most egotistical and immoral man I have ever met!"

He laughed at her.

"That is my ideal. To be absolutely egotistical. And you—you are ugly when you are angry."

"The Bohemian girl was never angry, of course!"

"No, she was never angry. Sad, yes. She was always sad. But there was a softness about her. Not an unsophisticated softness, but a vague elegance that I cannot explain to you. For instance, she was always so smart, the poor girl. Each day she had another hat: she could make them herself. And her dress was also smart. Not expensive and heavy looking, like what you are wearing, but of a distinctiveness that one sees only in Paris or Vienna."

He delicately rubbed his fingers together, as he tried to explain the girl's particular smartness.

She was silent. He made her feel clumsy, vulgar, ugly. Perversely, she pursued the subject of the Bohemian girl after they entered the restaurant.

"If she was so lovely, why are you not with her now?" Sophie asked when they were seated.

"I was stupid and foolish. It was this way: All during the winter I saw the girl every day. She had no work. At first, she was a little reserved. I mean, she did not come with me every time I wanted her. She had another reserve, too. For instance, after she

got work, she would not tell me where the place was. I did not know until I found the atelier simply by accident. I passed it one evening, and I saw her coming out, apart from the other girls, walking very quickly and with a sad, white face. Strangely, she was glad to see me, and took my arm and laughed like a child. And I never understood why she did not tell me where she worked of her own volition. Also, she would not allow me to come to her house, although the landladies in Vienna are not puritanical. She would not tell me why, but I found out later that she lived with another girl and that her room was perfectly awful."

"She was being coquettish." Sophie pushed away her consommé impatiently.

"No, I don't think so," he insisted. "She was simple. . . . And she would never go to the theater with me. I tried so often to make her go, but she wouldn't consent. And even when she was starving she wouldn't go to a café to eat with me until I almost dragged her in."

"She was conscious of being poor," suggested Sophie, maliciously. "Isn't there a sharp line drawn between the classes in Europe?"

"But no! Everyone goes to the theatre and the cafés in Vienna. And she was lovely enough to be at ease in any place. She looked as if she was of a very aristocratic family. Passing her in the street one would not know she was a working girl. There was one thing I did not like about her. It was her lack of maturity."

"She was probably anæmic," answered Sophie, almost cheerfully now. "But at any rate, she must have been interesting. You describe her very vividly."

"She was mysterious, certainly. One Sunday she said that she could not go out with me. You know, every Sunday we used to go to the Museum, but this day she said that she could not go. I was furiously angry with her, and I swore I would never see her again. But she would not give in. As I said, in some ways she was reserved. It was

this reserve that finished our affair. . . .

"But in the particular case I was telling you about, I resolved that she would come with me. She said that she was going out with someone else, but I didn't care for her words and went to the house where she lived, for the first time. I asked for her, and I shall never forget how she came down the dirty stairs, her hair braided like a child's, and a dressing-robe on. She had been reading and she held the book. It was wonderful to find her . . . to know she had been reading alone."

"And she came with you?"

"Oh, yes. She came quite willingly and we spent the whole day together. It was our most happy day in Vienna."

"And another time she ran away from me on the street, weeping almost violently. She went in St. Stephen's Church, and I waited outside, I remember, until the evening. I think that was our unhappiest day."

"Why had she cried?" asked Sophie practically.

"Why? Oh, I was probably cruel with her. . . . Yes, I remember I was often cruel about her past life."

They ate for a while in silence.

Sophie watched the man, and there were tears in his eyes. She was surprised that the tears did not arouse her mirth.

"And why didn't you live with her? Or marry her—if you loved her."

"It never occurred to me to propose it," he admitted, as if he had not thought of the matter before. "And as for marrying," he went on, more surely, "I shall never marry anyone."

"But aren't you too sure that she would have married you?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "When we were planning to go to England together, just before the War, she suggested I should marry her, because of the passports—so she said. All women come to the question sooner or later."

"Please finish the history," Sophie said, mashing up her ice-cream. "And by the way, what was her name?"

"Anna. Anna Kovochova. It reminds one of a Russian dancer's name,

doesn't it? Do you really want to hear the rest?"

"Yes, really. It is most exciting."

"Now you are malicious! But I'll tell you. We were together all of the long Vienna winter, and in the summer the girl had to go home to the country because there was no work for her. It was also time for me to go to Spain. I could not bear to leave her. I begged her to come to England with me, where we could both work, and live together. She said, 'Impossible, Phillip! I tell you to go; and it is wonderful that I am able to do so. It is like having a bird in my hand, and opening my fingers and saying, 'You are free!' I remember her words in German. We spoke German. We were both learning it, but she was quicker to learn than I."

"You said that she wanted to marry you," interrupted Sophie, sharply. "That was not allowing you to be free!"

"The question of marriage came up later. . . . And she left me to go to Bohemia. The next day I followed her there. Her house is the last house in a little village. Here in this big city you could not imagine such a village. You could not believe how little the houses were, how poor and simple and good the people. Her house was the very smallest, but the garden was beautiful, because her father grew flowers. I walked up the road, and she was just coming from the door to look for the postman. She was hoping for a letter from me."

He paused, instinctively, with the unconscious skill of a natural orator.

"When she saw me, her face became pink all over," he continued. "It was the only time I ever saw her face flush. She danced like a child and pulled me into the house. Her father was a great simple Bohemian. He reminded me of the pictures of the German Santa Claus. . . . I almost always ate at their house, and slept in the village hotel."

"And her mother?"

"Her mother is dead. The girl brought me one day to her grave in the Jewish cemetery at Prague."

"And your affair went on while you were a guest at her house?"

"Why not? It was a wonderful opportunity. We spent hours in the garden, among the flowers. And we used to take trips to Prague, and long walks into the country. She changed so much, and at first became almost plump, with plenty of food and the country air."

"And her father did not suspect?"

Pizarro shrugged his shoulders, irritated at the interruption. "He was always kind to me; and so were her brother and married sister. But after a little while the people began to laugh at her—not maliciously, you understand, but they used to say to her, 'Anna, why are you becoming so thin? You must be in love with the Spanish student!'"

"And what would she say?"

"She was very sensitive and avoided the people. But it was a wonderful month for me. I stayed there all of June, and then the war started. I hate the war. A quarrel about potatoes and coal, and yet it had an effect upon my life. . . . We were walking in the country, on the seventh of July. Suddenly the sky became dark, and it seemed as though there would be a bad storm. We hurried to the village, and there all seemed strangely quiet. The street was deserted and there was no one working in the fields. Then we saw there was a crowd around the Town Hall. Women and men were reading a notice posted on the door. It was a proclamation of mobilization. The men were called to fight in the Austrian army. The women were weeping and talking very much, but the men were silent and serious. They are big fellows, the Czechs, and the women are small and have Madonna-like faces.

"I had just enough money left to go to Spain. I had intended asking my father for more, but because of the war this would be impossible: the Government would take over the telegraph lines, I knew. And there were only a few more trains to Vienna. I had to go immediately."

"And you left her?"

"It was necessary. But, remember, I asked her to come with me. I loved her passionately. I begged her to come to Vienna with me, and then to Spain."

"And she refused?"

"Not exactly. She had some feminine reason for not wanting to come that day. She wanted me to go first, and promised to be in Vienna the next day. She planned to take the next train. It was then she spoke of the convenience of marriage. She said that she didn't want to leave with me because of what her family and the people would say. She had an absolutely foolish argument, I remember. I think she has often regretted it."

"You are cruel," Sophie told him. "You can't understand what you wanted her to do."

"At any rate, she failed me. I went to Vienna and waited all the next day. She didn't come. I was almost insane. The confusion was terrible. I mean, the traveling confusion. I watched for the trains, but they were all filled with soldiers, cursing the mobilization, and drunk. There was nothing else for me to do but to leave for Italy. But I waited that day for her. The following morning I got a letter. She said that the trains were only for soldiers and that she could not travel on the one which brought the letter. She said that surely they would begin to run the passenger trains soon, and begged me to wait until she could come. 'I am ready and waiting,' she wrote. 'I have told them I am going away, and I beg you to wait. I cannot live without you.'"

His eyes clouded. "But I was furious at her. I couldn't forgive her for letting me go alone. And besides, I couldn't wait. It was dangerous to wait another day. My money was going fast. Finally I took the train to Venice, and from there I went to Gibraltar."

"And she?"

"I think she knew it was her fault. Still, for a month she didn't write. I suffered again because of her silence. I wrote, begging her to come to Spain. I could not go on with the book I was

writing. My life was broken without her. The war was to blame, of course, but she blamed me. Women always want impossibilities of a man. They are not content unless they are asking an impossibility. Since Eden, they have been crying for a Superman."

"Yes, a Superman," murmured Sophie, dreamily. "This Anna, you see, she left the Garden with a smile on her lips, but you hung back, and thought of the nice climate and the free rent."

He laughed, and smoothed his dark hair.

"Now tell me truly, hard American girl: that was the motive of your unhappiness when I met you. You wanted a Superman."

"And you were unhappy because you hadn't been one," she flashed back at him.

"No, I was trying to continue to be one. Sometimes it is difficult."

She inclined her head mockingly. "How fortunate for me to be eating with a real Superman! One who admits he is a Superman. Well, Mr. Superman, here comes the waiter with our check."

"The woman's mission for the Superman!"

"Oh, please, I didn't mean that—please don't think so!"

But he would not give her the solace of a smile.

CHAPTER VII

WHEN they had left the restaurant and were walking toward Forty-second Street, Sophie reverted to the subject of Anna. This, of course, was the key to her maze, the clarifying charm.

"You are going back to the girl now?"

He took her arm tightly beneath his. "Please don't let us talk any more. I want to enjoy being near you, and think of nothing but of you."

"Finish the story, please," she begged.

"If you wish. Well, after making me suffer for two months, she wrote saying that she would come to Spain,

if I could send her the money. I began to save money furiously. I was living with my family in Valladolid at the time, and receiving an allowance from my father. I didn't spend a single cent. Then when the money was saved, I was given permission to go to study in the United States with money from the Government. And I went."

"You could have taken her?"

"Yes. But it was a new place, America. And it is better to see a new place alone. Besides, it was a punishment for her. I wrote the truth to her. I explained the matter frankly."

"Ah," drawled Sophie. "And what did she say to that?"

"I received a dreadful letter from her. She said that my letter had been 'like a slap in the face.' I can't think how she could be so vulgar. And my letter to her was beautiful. I told her that I was a man who would always seek the impossible; who would always go here and there. And that I would think of our months together as the most exquisite thing in my life."

"But that you would take advantage of her kind offer, and fly away."

"You are too feminine!" For the first time, he lost his poise.

"Why did you not tell her that you didn't love her any more?"

"I told her the truth—"

"No, indeed, you didn't. If you had loved her, you would have brought her with you. You never would have left her in the first place. You would have waited in Vienna for her."

"I told her the truth," he insisted in a low voice. "I shall always love her. It would have been impossible for me to have changed, because the moments when she was lovely will always remain with me. No one can take them away. Not you, not she, no matter how vulgar she becomes. It is the same with Vienna: it has been destroyed from the war, but to me Vienna will always be as it was in 1913."

"Why did you leave her if you had such memories?"

"Why did I leave Vienna, then? It was the war."

"She could have come to Spain."

"When she finally made up her mind, I had decided not to give up my possibilities for any woman."

"You said she was clever, and beautiful, and not frivolous. Why should she hurt your possibilities?"

"I would be expected to remain with her all my life. She would become a part of me. I would work on serious things: I would sell a book—sell part of myself—and she would have a new dress, or a new child. Last night in the Park I was almost ready to pay the price of love. I already had a cablegram in my pocket, sending her the money to come to Spain, and I was going back. But now I have decided to remain as long as possible."

"Because of me?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "No. You are connected with my decision, it is true, but you are only a part of the new current of life that has taken me."

"Good-bye," she said suddenly. "I'm going home. And you needn't come."

She ran down the stairs of the Subway station. At the ticket booth he was at her side.

"Just a minute—" he began.

"There is really nothing more to say." She turned from him to buy a ticket.

He followed her through the stile, and stood beside her on the station.

"Have you nothing more to say to me—nothing more?" He grasped her hand passionately.

"Nothing more." She had the uncomfortable feeling that she was acting like a school-teacher. "Except that I would advise you to take the Anna person, if she will let you."

"Don't be silly, please!"

"Then don't annoy me. I'll call a policeman," she added, suddenly. "You are contemptible, and I don't want to be your New York experience."

A train marked City Hall Local came and she boarded it. He made no move to follow, standing at the slot machine where she had left him, very slender and his eyes expressionless.

The ride to Brooklyn was more pain-

ful than that of the night before. She could forgive all of his insults, his grating egoism—she could forgive all but his absence. She wanted him near her, so that she might wound him with the red-hot darts of her. The way in which she had been pushed into the action of leaving him maddened her. The finality of their parting was dreadful to think of. He had shown her a new path, and then closed the door to her. It had been foolish, this projecting of herself into Anna's place. It had been this which had led to her flight. She clamored for him. It was a deep spiritual need which she felt. Her anxious fingers tingled to shape his destiny. He was the material that she had been waiting for, material worthy of the cleverest, most enchanting woman, and she, a lowly one, had him in her hands, and then dropped him lightly. . . .

When she got from the Local at the City Hall Station, he was waiting for her. She greeted him with her eyes only, and like two figures in a dream they stretched out hands toward each other. . . .

During the ride to her home, Pizarro spoke to Sophie as a lover. A strange, exacting lover, but definitely a lover. The situation was novel to her: he begged for her love as if it were a necessity of his being.

"Anna failed me—all have failed me. They tried to give, but they were incapable of it. But I think you could love. Please love me!"

At times it was difficult for her to avoid laughing.

And again: "I know I am childish. I should be indifferent. I should appear cold. But with women, I am a child. I ask naïvely, and they do not give until it is too late."

His thin face was always very near hers. His delicately tinted, sinewy hands moved with feminine grace.

"You ask so much of women. What do you give?" Sophie asked at last, softly.

Pizarro bit his lip, and heedless of the other passengers in the car, took her hand in both of his.

"Only sorrow. Not joy, I am afraid. But love, certainly."

Love and sorrow, she thought. Yes, a beautiful combination. She responded to his modern romanticism quite naturally.

"You would stay here, if I loved you?"

"I shall stay, anyhow. Now are you satisfied, little one?"

There was a significant pause.

She looked at him with her green eyes. His eyes were uncertain, but his chin and mouth were sensitive and his hands strong. There was a hint of corruption about him, but this attracted rather than repelled her.

"Sophie," he continued, "I think your love could keep me quiet long enough to do something."

"I think I'll love you," she murmured.

When they reached her home, he kissed her many times in the dark vestibule. They parted at last, with white faces. He turned back to ask her for her office telephone number, and wrote it precisely and carefully on the back of an old envelope, using the door for a support.

CHAPTER VIII

THE New York Central train rushed across the State. Phillip Pizarro and Sophie Butler sat in adjoining chairs and watched each other almost furtively. It was an oppressively hot morning in early July. Pizarro had removed his straw hat and his hair waved slightly where the hat had pressed. In summer dress, he looked at least five years younger than in the winter when he had worn the dark hat and flowing coat. With the success of his love fortunes, he had abandoned his Hamlet-like outfit and blossomed forth as a typical gallant of Madrid.

Sophie wore a close-fitting black hat and a thin blouse. Her light silk gloves were in her lap and a wedding ring shone on her left hand. Her narrow feet and beautiful ankles were pliant and loosely crossed.

They had just returned from the dining car, where they had lunched. The morning had passed quickly, filled with practical details of their trip, but the luncheon had been eaten in silence, and the silence still held. After all, why speak? thought Sophie. Perhaps all motives for speech had been disposed of by their flight together.

Alarmed at the thought, she tried to think of something to say to him, but she could think only of very trivial things: the heat of the day, for instance. Better silence. She remembered how they had chattered in the noisy Subway trains, and how they had lingered on her porch to talk, until her mother would come down and tap on the front window.

Pizarro broke the silence:

"Will you excuse me if I go to the smoking car for just one cigarette? You know, I haven't had one for three hours."

Sophie smiled somewhat equivocally and allowed him to depart.

She contemplated his empty chair in wonder. He had left behind him a copy of the *New Republic* and a morning newspaper. The chair was clearly his chair, and for the next two weeks his chair would always bear a relation to her.

She had struggled against him for seven months—three months of winter, three months of spring, and one summer month—and the result was the correlated chairs and the two suit-cases lying together in the rack above her head.

She rubbed her silken ankles together gently, and reflected with humor that she was on her way to be ruined. At that moment, she was technically a good girl. It pleased her to be able to see her next step so clearly. She was only puzzled at not having taken it earlier. He had converted her mind long since, and this was the courageous carrying out of her altered opinions.

Early in their association she had ceased to think of marrying him, although her family had the idea that she would marry him. The other thing was entirely outside their experience.

He had made a philosophy of his viewpoint on the marriage question, of course. He explained to her the impossibility of love existing where there are chains. The way to keep him always at her side would be to allow him to be free, he told her. Womanlike, she was cynical in discussing the question abstractly. A sense of delicacy made her sheer away from their personal problem. She faced the situation honestly: he would not pay the usual price for her, but she loved him. . . .

She tried to trace the amazing course of her love for him. She had begun by flouting him and ended by weeping abjectly at his departure, even when she knew that she would see him the next day. Toward the Spring, she began to lose weight. The contour of her face sharpened and her eyes became very large and slightly reddened at the lids. Several times she made serious attempts to break the affair, but each time he had drawn her back to him.

Then came July and her vacation. It was then that she took the next courageous step. She decided to go away with Pizarro. She suggested it to him one evening while they were in a moving-picture theatre.

To her surprise, he was not overcome with joy, but answered her almost bitterly:

"Very good! You want to go with me now. We will go. But it is late, Sophie."

"You know that it is our first opportunity! You are unreasonable."

"We have had many opportunities, but you allowed me to suffer for you all this time."

"I explained how I felt," she faltered. "I didn't want to do anything common—and there wasn't a chance for anything else. It is casual enough even now, the whole thing. But if you don't want to go, just say so."

"Forgive me, dear!" he whispered, frightened a little. "Of course we will go, and we will try to be happy."

The final plans were almost ridiculously simple in operation, after the long time of waiting. Mrs. Butler,

absolutely without suspicion, was glad when Sophie spoke of going to the country for two weeks. She thought the girl's absence might crystallize the prolonged love affair, and helped her in repairing and adding to her wardrobe, not dreaming that they were nuptial garments she was handling.

True to his doctrine of impressionism, Pizarro made no plans for them beyond the two weeks, but Sophie felt that the step would be tremendously important in her life. She could not imagine the possibility of her life going on in the same way after the experience she anticipated.

They chose at random a hotel in the Adirondacks, after a glance through a summer resort directory. They decided to start on a Saturday morning and would arrive in the evening.

On the Friday night before their departure, Mrs. Butler stayed up until twelve o'clock to finish an organdy dress she had made for Sophie. She sat under the dining-room light, and Sophie felt poignantly unhappy at the sight of new gray hairs on her mother's temples, and at the beads of perspiration on her pale forehead. She thought again that everything her mother touched . . . became sad, somehow.

Pizarro and she had met at the station. And now they were on the train together, going away to freedom and love. She looked at the plated gold wedding ring that they had purchased with much laughter at a little jewelry shop near the station. She had wanted to buy one at the Five and Ten Cent Store. She was a little hysterical from excitement. They had compromised on the plated ring, which cost \$3.50. She had joked about the cheapness of the whole procedure, pretending to find it delightful . . . but she was annoyed that he was not ashamed. And now while she waited for him to come back, she looked at the ring resentfully, and hated him for not having insisted upon a gold one.

He was gone for an hour, at least.

"Was it pleasant in the smoking-car?" she asked, suavely, when he was

seated. She had been waiting for his return in a frenzy of resentment, but she managed to hide her anger.

He answered her frankly:

"For a little time it was wonderful to watch the landscape alone—I was remembering Keats' Sonnet on Blue—but suddenly I remembered you—how you were—so lovely, you know, and all my doubts disappeared immediately, and you see I am back at your side. That would be my ideal, to be always free to go from you—and to always come back."

She tried to control the agitation his words caused her, but he saw the tightening of her mouth.

"I have hurt you, Sophie? I know it is too much to ask of a woman—but just because it is too much, I ask it."

"It isn't very nice that you have doubts. And for you to remind me—so soon—that you are going away from me—it isn't very pleasant."

"But I want to tell you the truth all the time, dear. I must not entangle myself with lies. I don't want to hide any of my thoughts from you. It is impossible for love to be compatible with reserve."

Still she was silent. She could not think of words with which to answer him. She was confused at this new demand.

"Did you read 'The Idiot,' by Dostoevsky?"

She shook her head.

"The man in the story, when asked what he wants of love, says, very simply, 'I should like to have the love of a person with whom I could speak freely, as with myself.'"

"The Idiot said that, of course?"

He nodded, seriously, but she knew he saw her irony. "Perhaps I also am an idiot to expect a woman to like the truth, for women make a fetish of the lie. Yet it is the only thing I ask you to do for me, to keep my love: allow me to be truthful with you."

Sophie closed her eyes wearily. The *only* thing he asked! She had made herself romantic because he asked it;

she had also defied conventions. And she had thought that the gift of herself would quiet him. But no; it involved more demands. . . .

He began to tell her of his thoughts in the smoking car. She watched the rapid movement of his mouth, his variable eyes. Of what he said, she caught only a word, here and there. But it didn't matter. She knew him well enough to follow his meaning without listening to every word.

" . . . such stupid looking men. In Europe you see poor travelers, dirty, but there is always something interesting. . . .

She knew that he was expressing his discontent with the smoking-car.

"But it isn't very important, is it? Whether the people are interesting or not? Do you want the railroad company to load the train with passengers that particularly appeal to you?"

She said this after he had spoken ten minutes about the unpleasantness of the smoking car.

"That is quite American, Sophie," he cried. "Be pleased with all sorts of inconveniences and unpleasantness! Be *nice* under all circumstances!"

"But it isn't my fault," she insisted. "Why bore me with it?"

"There!" he cried triumphantly. "I must remain quiet. I must hide my thoughts. I—"

Sophie ended the discussion by leaving her seat, intending to go to the wash-room.

Before she had gone a few feet, he was at her side, dragging her back.

She turned upon him in amazement: "What is the matter with you? Are you insane?" She furiously broke away from him.

"Tell me where you are going!" he demanded in a loud voice.

A tall young man with prominent ears projected himself into the situation. He had got on the train with them at New York, and since then had divided his attention between the *Atlantic Monthly* and Sophie and the Spaniard, who sat across the aisle from him.

"Can I assist you?" he asked Sophie, gazing sternly into Pizarro's furious eyes.

"No—oh, no!" began Sophie. "It is a mistake—"

"Be silent, Sophie!" Pizarro pushed the girl aside and stepped closer to the tall young man.

"Apologize for this impertinence," demanded Pizarro, with cocky belligerence.

"They mustn't fight! They mustn't fight!" Sophie was thinking desperately, afraid to speak lest she should further complicate the situation.

The other passengers were watching the scene with interest.

"Be careful," someone said, "them foreigners carry knives!"

The tall young man ignored Pizarro.

"Can I do anything for you?" he asked Sophie again, turning his broad back on Pizarro.

"Don't dare speak to this lady!" interrupted Pizarro, and as he spoke he clutched the young man's shoulder and twirled him away from Sophie. And then, without warning, he lowered his smooth black head and buried it into the abdomen of Sophie's would-be rescuer.

Knocked breathless by the unexpected blow, Pizarro's victim stared at him stupidly, with open mouth. Then the train slowed down and the conductor called the name of a station. Immediately the young man gathered himself together, pulled his suit-case from the rack, retrieved the *Atlantic Monthly*, and dashed out of the train.

There was a roar of laughter from the passengers, in which Pizarro joined.

"Did you ever see anything like it? He butted him like a goat!" Sophie could hear a man say.

Sophie opened the *New Republic* and turned the pages violently.

"They're all laughing at you!" she told him, without raising her eyes from the magazine. "It was a ridiculous thing to do!"

"I think he was the ridiculous one," Pizarro insisted, smiling in a satisfied way. "The way he rushed out of the

train. So very American. It was his station! His dignity is not important! Nothing is important but to get off at his station."

"Lucky for you he did get off," replied Sophie, bluntly, "or he might have hurt you."

But Pizarro only smiled, well pleased with himself, it seemed.

Everyone was staring. She felt staring eyes on her back, on her downcast eyelids. She revisualized the whole thing: the sudden lowering of Pizarro's head, its littleness as it darted through space like an overgrown bullet. And how it buried itself in that ridiculous part of the body, the stomach. If he had seriously hurt his victim, there might have been some point to the attack, but the man had merely gasped, and then calmly got his things and left the train, treating the blow as if it had been a trivial sting of an insect.

"And why did you make the move in the first place? What did you think I was going to do?" she asked Pizarro, curiously.

He was studying a map in the timetable. "I thought you were going to do some impulsive thing: such as leaving the train, or perhaps throwing yourself out."

"I was only going to wash my hands," she told him disgustedly.

He shrugged his shoulders and changed the subject:

"I see this place we are going to is quite near Canada. Perhaps we could cross the border while we are there. I should like to see Canada—" he caught himself before he completed the sentence. He was going to say, "Before I leave America."

The porter lighted the train. Outside it was not entirely dark. Sophie watched the landscape mechanically, to avoid meeting the eyes of the people.

After watching her profile for a few minutes, Pizarro put the time-table in his pocket and leaned forward and caught her hand.

"Are you thinking of—?"

She shrank from his touch. She lowered her eyes to avoid looking at

his head. It was impossible to forget that he had used it as a weapon. Like a goat, someone had said. A goat, one of the most ridiculous animals! Ridiculous and— What other thing was there about goats? Something repulsive. . . . She remembered. Yes, she could connect him with that, too.

"Are you, dear?" he insisted.

Tonight? So soon must the next step come.

It was already dark.

"Where are we now, I wonder?" she asked him. The train was almost empty. Their station was near the end of the line.

"The next stop is Plattsburg; we have about two hours after that, according to the time-table."

She smiled at him. "Now, don't be silly. But I must wash my hands."

"Oh, forgive me, dear?" he cried. "Go, of course."

She took her handbag and put on her hat. As she walked to the back of the train, she turned around twice to look at him.

She could see his head over the top of his chair.

In the washroom she waited until she felt the train slow down.

"Plattsburg!" cried the conductor.

Sophie slipped out of the room and into the vestibule. When the train stopped, she was the first to alight. When it was pulling out of the station, she darted behind a waiting automobile, so that Pizarro could not see her if he were looking out the car window.

There was no train for New York that night, and she stayed at a hotel. Before going to sleep, she wept a few uncertain little tears. In the dark room, above the footboard of her bed, she could fancy his suave hands, fanning the air in delicate emphasis. But when she remembered his head, she sighed with relief and fell into virginal slumber.

CHAPTER IX

SHE got home late the following night.

"I just didn't like the place when I got there," she told her mother. "And losing my bag was rather discouraging. . . . I think I'll take the Romance Literature Course at the Columbia summer school instead of going some place else."

"It was a shame to waste all that money on carfare, though," sighed Mrs. Butler.



A SUCCESSFUL man: one who believes nothing. A successful woman: one who believes no one.



TO convert an affair into an engagement it is only necessary for the man to fall dangerously ill.



Just Him and Her

By Ruth Suckow

I

"**W**HO lives in that little house at the edge of town across from the cemetery?"

"Oh, that's where the Lew Daveys live."

"Just the old folks?"

"Yes. Just him and her."

* * *

This was one of the oldest houses in Plum Branch.

It stood close to the ground and leaned forward a little. It was of a gray, aged, indeterminate color. It had small-paned windows that gave out a saddish light. The porch floor sloped toward the ground and was broken at the edges. The posts were thin with an insert of lattice-work. An old buggy seat stood on the porch. No one but an old couple would be living in such a house.

There was a gray picket fence around the lawn, but not around the garden that sloped south to the straggling grassy road that went only as far as the hilly pasture across from the house. Lilac bushes grew so close to this fence that the leaves pushed between the pickets. There was no gate, but a scraggly cedar tree on each side the opening like a gate post. A clump of tall pines grew in one corner of the lawn, and, underneath, a mass of bluebells standing like a pool of blue water. There were flowering bushes close to the house wall and a lily-of-the-valley bed near the porch, in a corner. In the backyard stood plum trees with smoke-black branches strangely wind-blown

and now a delicate froth of greenish-white bloom.

The house was on the outskirts of town. A red-brown clay road went past it and died out in a few grassy wagon tracks at the fence of Glissendorf's pasture. The Plum Branch cemetery was up this road a little way. The white tombstones were set thick among blackish evergreens where birds were always busy. Just across from the house, a hill pasture rose in an emerald-green mound. It was sprinkled with buttercups. A little brown path was cut around it. A wooden gate fastened with an old wire gave entrance. A reddish-colored dilapidated wagon stood in the grass at the foot of the hill. Plum Branch, the creek, was beyond the hill in a limestone gully.

II

THE Lew Daveys had come to Plum Branch among the early settlers; but now not many people seemed to know them. They were retired farmers. Mr. Davey had a team and did a little hauling and his own gardening. He still owned a farm west of town. They lived on the rent—on a little of it. Most of it they saved.

Some of the ladies in the Congregational church—Mrs. Sperry, Mrs. Kuehnle, Edie Robbins—always took pains to think of Mrs. Davey, to ask her to Missionary meetings and to solicit her for church suppers, to speak to her at church. But she went out very little.

They both did go to church, however, every Sunday morning, and sat at the side in the fifth row from the front. People sometimes asked who that old couple were who always sat in the fifth row. "He" was short and stocky, but now he began to look very frail—hollowed out between the big bones. He had a short rough beard. "She" had a grayish sad indeterminate face like the face of her house. She wore an old dark blue suit with gathered sleeves, a small black hat with a bunch of black ribbon at the side, and gray cotton gloves.

They never made much response when the minister shook hands with them after church. They never seemed to make much response to anything. There was a kind of emptiness in their faces—yet not stupidity. As if they had lived on so long without exactly meaning to, and couldn't make much of it. In church, their gnarled, misshapen hands, with the skin stretched tight over the knuckle bones and hollow and wrinkled between, lay with a kind of mournful patience in their laps. They had worked hard all their lives. Now there was no need.

The air of their house was clean, and yet there was something mouldy about it. The rooms were scrubbed, but that could not lighten the dark, old-fashioned look of the brown-painted woodwork and cupboards and the dark-gray rag rugs with threads of red. Everything was aired religiously, but there could be no freshness in the look of the orange plush on the parlor chairs and settee, the brown-and-red calico cushion on the lounge, the red-checked table cloth, the little old ornaments and pictures in walnut or silvered frames, the dark wall paper. The plants, too, growing in tin cans wrapped in crêpe paper—the geraniums, the ferns, the cactus, the dark-red foliage, the red lilies.

It was strange to step into this house in its out-of-the-way setting

and sense the old left-over life lingering on in it.

It seemed as if they must always have been living in this house, but really it was not so long. When the children were gone they had stayed on at the farm for a few years and then rented it and moved into town, as most farmers did. They said they were getting along and it was time to take some comfort in life.

Their farm was out on the Sand Spring road just off the highway—a grayish, rain-stained house like this, shaded with bushes, with fowls straggling over the yard and the needle-matted ground under the grove of evergreens. It had never been a rich farm, but they had made "enough."

They had had a big family. The pictures of all the children were in the blue, plush-covered album with the steel clasps on the center-table.

The one of Levi, the oldest, was a wedding picture. It had been taken at the old photographer's in Adamsville, where all the wedding couples used to go. It had a background of blurry trees done in charcoal work on a big screen, and in front of this the bride was sitting on an artificial stump, with the groom standing beside her. The bride was one of the Liebes. She had a broad German face with a fringe of light hair straight across it, and she wore a white basque strained tightly across her big breast and hips. Levi had curly hair and a curly mustache and a sour, dubious look. They had moved out to Nebraska and Levi had died of cancer of the stomach. "She" had married again.

The next two children, Edwin and Lily, had died in infancy. They had no pictures—only two black memorial cards with their names and dates and verses of Scripture, with two doves bearing open Bibles, in gold. They were buried out in the little Sand Spring cemetery, hardly used any more, where the old slabs of white were now toppling over the sunken,

grass-covered mounds under the sad-creaking evergreens.

Luella, the oldest girl, now lived in Diagonal, in the southern part of the State. Her husband had a vulcanizing works. In her picture she had a slight wildflower prettiness—small features under frizzled bangs—but she was now scrawny, overworked, bitter-tongued, with a great brood of children and “nothing to do with.” She wrote home occasionally on scraps of yellowish scratch paper torn from the children’s tablets, and sometimes the old lady made little night-gowns for the youngest of the children.

Sam, the next boy, was a farmer. He did not write, but sometimes he brought his whole family in the car and stopped over for Sunday dinner.

Achsia, the favorite daughter—they always called her Axie—lived close by in Adamsville, the county seat. Her mother used to go often to see her, but now she seldom did. She said she was getting so she hated to go places. Axie still wrote, and the children wrote. Axie was fat and dark, rather pop-eyed. She had a good, sentimental heart and had always been kind to the old folks.

John had died of tuberculosis when he was twenty-seven. In the picture it could be seen that he was of a more delicate mould than the others—his nose thin, temples slightly hollowed, thoughtful eyes. There was a ghastly enlarged picture of him in a silvered frame on the parlor wall with all the life retouched out of it. His tombstone in the family lot could be seen just beyond the Soldiers’ Monument in the cemetery.

Walter had gone West and had a fruit farm now in Oregon. They seldom heard from him. Or from Barney, who had not turned out well, and was still unsettled—going to a place and then tearing up and leaving almost as soon as he got there. The last they had heard of him he had been working at the docks in New Orleans. He was separated from his

wife, whom the old people had never seen.

These were all that were left to them.

They knew a few old people around town, but not well. They had never had time to get acquainted with folks. Sometimes “she” drove out into the country to see the Old Lady Finley, who was living with her daughter. “He” went down to the store occasionally and hung around with the other old fellows who sat on the bench under the awning until the sun got around that way.

They still got up at five or half-past every morning. “He” started the fire in the cook stove and “she” made the breakfast of fried eggs or buckwheat cakes that was just what they had always had. They ate at the kitchen table, silently, the old man bent over the table and shoveling in his food, the old lady jumping up to wait on him as in the old days when she had had the men to feed.

Then he went out to hoe a little in the garden. You could see his bowed, gnarly figure in the faded shirt and overalls, moving slowly, with a strange sad significance, over the soft earth-brown of the plowed field—the green pastures beyond, and the blossoming plum trees that scented the May air.

But he couldn’t do much any more. He had tried to trim up the plum trees this spring, but had suddenly grown dizzy up there where the thin, black branches criss-crossed against the blue sky, and had almost “had a fall.”

He was not even going to do hauling this spring. He liked to feed the two big horses in the barn that smelled of hay and manure. All the stock he had now, and he had always been good to his stock. The horses were fed up so, the men in town said, that they were too lazy to pull a load.

Then there were errands “she” could send him on downtown. He did most of the trading and still handled all the money. “She” was

careful how she used up stamps and crochet cotton, for she hated to ask him for more. Their money lay in the Plum Branch Bank, ready to be distributed among the children when they were gone.

The old man was not unhappy working out in his garden. He liked the smell of the soil. But it was so small, so no account, after the farm. He had a feeling of being lost, somehow, "let down."

"She" was better off. Her work had never seemed to count for as much as his. It had not brought in the money. But it had lasted better. It fit into the new place. She still had a house to look after, and time to do it right at last. She did everything herself—washing, ironing, baking, cleaning, sewing.

And then there were her plants. She had always been a great hand for plants, but had never had much time for them on the farm. She had red foliage plants and cactus and red King lilies. She tended the plants in the afternoon when all the housework was "done up" and no one could reproach her.

Then she did crotcheting and knitting, although her eyes were giving out. Now she was working on a crotcheted filet yoke for Axie's Marguerite's graduating clothes. She always had some work in hand in the flowered silk bag that Marguerite had made for her.

Still, this was not much after her work with that big family—every minute full. Sometimes when she sat down to her fancy work, quite contentedly, in the afternoon, a feeling of guilt would come over her. It would seem as if there were something she ought to be doing. Then she too would feel lost, sitting there in her little cane-seated rocker by the dining-room window, looking out beyond the pines to the white stones in the cemetery.

The children—all gone. None of them needed her any more. None of them had seemed to need her very

long. Except John. He had needed her. He used to sit in the big rocker by the west window in the farm house, reading the magazines that the minister brought out to him. He used to call for her when she was out on the place at work. She felt closer now to John, in his lone grave in the cemetery just down the road a little way, than to the others. There was something she still could do for John. She could care for his grave, plant it with pansies, put on it her choicest flowers. She took a kind of strange, sad pride in its order and beauty.

She had never had much time to give to the children when they were small. As soon as they were grown they had married and left her. Each other was all these two had left.

III

THEY did not talk much. They never had. When they did, it was in a dry, faintly sarcastic tone. They would have been ashamed to show affection. They would not have thought it becoming in old folks.

Besides, what they felt was not affection. It was a feeling of belonging.

The only things on earth to which they were still of use were each other. To each other, they were not left over, and lingering on. "He" locked the doors and made all safe as he had always done. He tinkered around and made things a little handier for her. He went for the mail and bought in the milk and got her medicine for her at the doctor's. "She" mended his clothes and kept him tidy, saw to his comfort, cooked the food that he could eat. Each felt a kind of deep, unspoken reliance on the other, and their age that was setting them apart from everything else was pulling them together. No one else knew what they had been through. No one else understood.

In these spring evenings, "she" sat out on the buggy seat on the porch and "he" on the step below her, star-

ing ahead of them—at the line of the green hill pasture against the sky, at the unused road beyond the fence. "He" might say—"Corn's goin' in late this year"—or "she"—"Who's that I see going into the cemetery just now? Looked like it might be Haller's folks." The sky deepened to cool dark blue; a little moon hung over the plum trees. The thick green grass was wet; sent up a fresh night odor. The old wagon stood sad, forlorn, at the foot of the hill. "Well, might's well go to bed—I s'pose. D'you put the hoe in the barn?"—

They got up and went into the warm, dark house, lit a lamp in the small downstairs bedroom, undressed, climbed into the old pine bedstead. Neither would have thought of going without the other, somehow.

The pale light from the window that they never opened until June silvered their thin, hollow faces and lay like frost on their hair.

But they were feeble now. The life was running out. Axie said she had them on her mind. She even wrote a letter to Sam about them in her childish, sentimental hand without any capital letters. She kept meaning to run over to Plum Branch. But somehow she never got there.

The minister could see it when he went to call. He was glad to meet George Horton on the street so that he could say what was in his mind—"I went over to the Lew Daveys' this afternoon. You know, they're getting pretty feeble. I'm afraid the old man won't last much longer."

They knew it themselves in a kind of way. They gave up one thing after another—going to church, trips to town. When they sat, a kind of silence seemed to muffle them in.

But it was the old lady who went first. Before the bluebells were gone, before she could see how many plums there would be on the trees that year, before the yellow and purple pansies were out on the lot in the cemetery. She was sick only a few

days. Axie was there. The man wandered about the place, stood in the barn, sat out on the old buggy seat. She was unconscious most of the time. But just at the last she seemed to give him a look—full of a kind of mute, intense meaning.

The old man seemed to "take it" better than they had feared. He was quiet and docile; he hardly spoke. He let Axie lead him about at the funeral, washed and brushed, in his best black clothes.

"I don't know as Pa ever seemed to make over her much," Axie said to Sam, "but he'll miss her just the same."

Afterward they looked about the place for him and finally found him sitting out on the cistern by the side wall where some white violets grew. He did not seem to be grieving—only sitting with his hands on his knees. They felt relieved; they could hardly have said why.

Axie put her arms around him. "Come on into the house with us, don't you want to, Pa?"

He let her lead him in. They went into the dining-room, that seemed pitiful and useless now. Axie sat down on the lounge beside him and took his hand. Sam went creaking solemnly up to the rocker.

"Pa, I'm going to stay with you tonight," Axie said, "and until I've got things all looked after. But after that I got to go back. I got the children, you know. Don't you want to come back with me, Pa?"

She stroked his hand. Sam did not dare to look at them—he stared at an old faded photograph of the farm that hung behind the stove.

"Why, yes," the old man said vacantly. "I guess I might do that."

"I'd love to have you, Pa," Axie's voice shook with relief. "Just think how the children will like it." She kissed his hand. He did not notice her.

"Well," Sam said, rising, "I suppose me and the missus had better be starting if we're going to get back.

Goodbye, Pa." He shook hands awkwardly.

"Goodbye. Goodbye."

The old man went to bed when Axie told him to that night. The next day he was just the same. He went about the place, stood a little while here and a little while there, sat out on the cistern again. There was a vacancy in his eyes. He did not seem to be thinking or feeling much.

The next day at twilight Axie went into the dining-room to speak to him. He was not there—but she could see him in the parlor, in the plush chair by the window, a queer place for him to sit. But there was a stillness—she knew before she called out "Pa!" and went up to him, that he was gone.

"Just like that," she told her husband tearfully. "I left him while I

went out to the kitchen, and when I came back he was already gone!"

* * *

People in Plum Branch had not thought very much about it when the old lady died. They had only said, "I hear the Old Lady Davey died this morning." But they talked of the old man's death, the women in their houses, the men in the Post Office and the depot and the store.

"Yes, sir, that was a queer thing. There didn't seem to be anything special the matter with him—no sickness, you could say. It just seemed as if when *she* went *he* wanted to go too. Couldn't keep on without her. Didn't know what to do with himself, they'd been together so long. I've known of other old couples like that."



Ashes

By Abigail W. Cresson

I HAVE let the fire go out—
See, the hearth is swept—
(Hid beneath the ashes
One spark I have kept.)

Yes, this little fire is dead. . . .
Do not stir the embers!
(You must go without a kiss,
Lest my mouth remembers.)



CULTURE will spread when libraries, churches, and art galleries begin to charge stiff admissions.



Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

MEDITATION.—In such a country as this one, with capitalism securely in the saddle and practically all human values reckoned in terms of dollars and cents, it is not only hopeless for a man to try to get on without money, but also a trifle absurd. The "free artist" hymned by Beethoven has no place among us; when he sets up shop, in Greenwich Village or elsewhere, he is disdained by everyone, and quite justly. The truth is that money-getting is so easy in America that only the incurable fanatic or the complete fool fails at it. The per capita wealth of the country is vastly greater than that of any other nation ever heard of in history, and a great deal of this wealth is in the hands of imbeciles waiting patiently to be gulled. To put aside the business of gulling them as something too vexatious and difficult to be undertaken, or, worse, as something *infra dig.*—this is the act, not of a man of superior self-respect, but simply of a silly fellow. The finest thinking is done and the loftiest art is produced, not by men oppressed by poverty, but by men who are at ease. It is the artist's first duty to his art to achieve that ease for himself. In the older countries it is difficult, and sometimes downright impossible. But here it is an almost childish matter. Any man with a superior air, the intelligence of a stock-broker and enough resolution to come in when it rains—any such man, in this great and glorious Republic, can cadge enough rhino to make life soft for him. If he fails, it is not a tribute to his high artistic passion, but merely a testimony

to his lack of ordinary industry and ingenuity, and ordinary sense.

§ 2

The Usual Buncombe.—The investigation of the so-called Ku Klux Klan, lately forced upon Congress by a posse of inflammatory newspapers, showed all the clumsy disingenuousness that habitually attends such buffooneries in the Republic. The motives behind the bawling and snuffling were diligently concealed; the true nature of the Klan was passed over with gingery caution; and there was little save a slimy hypocrisy in all the indignation over its unlawful acts.

As a matter of fact, there is no evidence whatever that the Klan has ever done anything that, by Southern standards, is regarded as unlawful. It has, indeed, fallen a great deal short of what was the everyday practice in most of the Southern states long before it was heard of. Its tarrings and featherings seem to be performed in a humane and decorous manner, and even with some approach to politeness and surgical asepsis. It has never tortured anyone in the barbarous style so common in Florida and Mississippi. It has never committed a murder, or even been accused of committing a murder. The worst ever alleged against it is that it once tarred a loose woman somewhere in Texas. But this is certainly no novel violation of Southern chivalry. In nearly all of the Southern states colored women have been lynched with great cruelty, and only a few weeks ago, in Virginia, the most civilized of them, a mob set out to lynch a white woman,

and she was saved only by the skin of her teeth.

The very newspapers that now devote the largest space to denouncing the relatively mild savageries of the Klan were all silent when far worse savageries were perpetrated by other organizations, notably the American Legion. For every crime that can be laid to the Klan there are a hundred that can be laid to the Legion, and most of them show a greater cruelty and imbecility, and far worse cowardice. But when they were at their height, during the maniacal Bolshevik scare of two years ago, most of the newspapers reported them without comment, and the few that commented on them at all approved them. These same great gazettes were magnificently silent when the profiteers of San Francisco tried to railroad Mooney to the gallows by perjury, and when Debs was sent to prison in plain violation of his constitutional rights, and when O'Leary was charged with treason and brought to trial for his life for the preposterous crime of having called the late Woodrow a liar, and when hundreds of conscientious objectors were clubbed and tortured in military prisons, and when scores of American journals were barred from the mails at the order of Burleson, and when innocent enemy aliens, in violation of the law of nations, were robbed by the Enemy Property Custodian, and when the Chicago I. W. W.'s were convicted of conspiracy despite plain proofs that at the time of the alleged conspiracy they were actually in jail, and when innocent aliens were arrested as Bolsheviks, held in prison without warrant in law, and their families permitted to beg. And they are silent today about the Sacco-Vanzetti case, one of the most amazing scandals in the whole history of American jurisprudence. And about the fact that a half-grown Russian girl is now in Atlanta prison, serving a 15-year sentence for the astounding offense of having protested against the American invasion of Russia in 1917—an invasion so clearly illegal that even Congress revolted against

it, and forced the Army to call it off.

The newspapers that condoned all of these violations of the Constitution, of the laws of the land and of common decency now profess to be horrified by the mild monkeyshines of the Ku Klux Klan. It is as if one opened fire on a man for kissing one's wife, but gracefully permitted him to sell her to the Italians. As a matter of fact, the worst acts of the Ku Klux are no more than feeble imitations, by unimaginative and ignoble men, of things that were done during the war by officials of the United States Government, with the connivance of the President of the United States and the approval of the overwhelming majority of the American people and of all save a half dozen American newspapers. These half dozen were suppressed by Burleson, and the rest of the papers made no protest against their suppression. We are simply paying now for that pusillanimity. The rights of the citizen are worth nothing in the United States today because everyone was silent when those rights were first invaded. The doings of the Ku Klux do not differ in kind from doings that have had the enthusiastic approval of all the great American journals and of all the great American publicists, from Chief Justice Taft down. They differ only in degree, and there the difference is in favor of the Klan.

But there is a worse hypocrisy concealed in the matter. In all the ranting against the Simmons janissaries I have yet to encounter mention of two very salient facts: (a) that no American newspaper would have wasted space upon their banal disorders unless they had committed the folly of attacking the Jews, and (b) that the Ku Klux Klan is essentially a Methodist organization, and has intimate relations with other notorious Methodist organizations, including, in some states, the Anti-Saloon League.

The first fact is concealed because, if it were made public, most readers would conclude, no doubt correctly, that the whole pother is inspired by wealthy Jewish advertisers, already

greatly alarmed by the attacks of Henry Ford. The second is kept *pianissimo* because of the general fear of religious organizations which afflicts the whole American press. Yet both facts are supported by abundant evidence. The first is almost obvious. The American Jews, for some unintelligible reason, are enormously frightened by the idiotic crusade of Ford, and view every fresh manifestation of anti-Semitism with the utmost trembling, and keep the newspapers that they control and patronize keyed up to alert watchfulness. Let any American so much as hint that it would be better if fewer Jewish refugees from Poland came pouring into the country, and at once he feels a corrective slap. Let a newspaper toy with the idea, and it is as good as ruined.

Simply for mentioning the matter in this place, I shall be attacked furiously in the Jewish weeklies and accused of carrying on an anti-Semitic propaganda. This is absurd. I am surely anything but anti-Semitic. In so far as the Jews differ from normal Americans, I am thoroughly in favor of the Jews. What I object to is their too facile Americanization—their idiotic adoption of the American idea that the way to prevent having a subject discussed is to forbid the discussion of it. In the present case the club they hold over the newspapers will one day crack their own skulls. On the one hand, they insist upon getting lavish space for every argument that they can drum up in favor of themselves; on the other hand, they prohibit any man to say a word against them, however honestly and appositely. The result is that anti-Semitism, denied free expression and discussion, increases enormously under cover, and that whenever it flares up despite the ban, as in the cases of Ford and the Ku Klux Klan, it shows an alarming popularity. There are intelligent Jews who see this fact clearly, and deplore the methods of the professional Yiddophiles. But the campaign against anti-Semitism is not being managed by such intelligent Jews, but by ignorant fellows who believe in the brute power

of money, and by their attendant rabbis, charitymongers, and other such pediculae. The net result of their efforts is that anti-Semitism is growing rapidly, and that some ambitious demagogue will shortly discover it, and make a live issue of it. Simmons, who has a good nose, smells the scent. The more violently he is attacked on the ground of his anti-Semitism, the more easy he will find it to collect the money of the boobery.

That the Ku Klux Klan is almost indistinguishable from the political branch of the Methodist church—by which I mean the whole *bloc* of evangelical churches of the camp-meeting variety—must be plain to anyone who examines its programme. Its leader is a Methodist clergyman, and its prosperity runs everywhere in direct proportion to the prosperity of the Anti-Saloon League and other such Methodist organizations. Its fundamental aim is to propagate its ideas, not by persuasion, but by bullying—which is precisely the aim of the Anti-Saloon League, and, throughout the South, of the evangelical churches. Like those churches it appeals directly to the primary emotions of the most ignorant and degraded classes of men. It plays upon their fears—of Rome, of Bolshevism, of the Jews, of the devil. It feeds their great moral passion. It encourages their secret yearning to work their will upon their betters. And its propaganda is appropriately carried on, like that of the camp-meeting divines, in terms of a hocus-pocus so preposterous that it would make any educated man laugh, and in English so bad that it almost equals the balderdash of the Hon. Warren Gamaliel Harding. The only literate men who seem to belong to it are evangelical clergymen and politicians. These are precisely the *intelligentsia* of the general Methodist movement.

There is not much chance that this organization will make any progress save in the rural districts, and even there it will have hard sledding in the North. It is essentially Southern in complexion, for in the South the hedge

clergy have an endless supply of ready victims in what the better sort of Southerners call the poor white trash. These poor white trash, having come to a realization of their political power, fix the whole tone of Southern politics, and of latter-day Southern *Kultur* no less. They are degraded drunkards—and hot for Prohibition. They fear Rome—but worship Billy Sunday. They rise against the Jews—but accept docilely the far worse exactions of the cotton-mill sweaters. In brief, ignorant barbarians. Unluckily, there are enough of them to make an intellectual desert of a whole section of the United States. Worse, they are often able to enforce their aberrations upon the rest of the country—for example, Prohibition. The problem of dealing with them will engage the statesmen of the future. That problem will never be solved unless the present American reluctance to examine religious organizations realistically is adjourned, and there is a frank dealing with the ecclesiastical numskullery which lies at the bottom of their cavortings.

§ 3

A Suggestion for the Movies.—That the motion picture impresarios, like the play producers, have lately been losing everything but their power to deny it to interviewers, everyone knows. For this sad state of affairs, as many reasons have been assigned as in the analogous instance of the theatre, but—as in the case of the theatre—the principal reason has been sedulously kept in the cellar. This reason is the dulness of the motion picture impresarios themselves, not that of the motion pictures, as is claimed. Once again, finding the impresarios' business a deal more *intrigant* than my own, I charitably rush to their rescue.

The movie producers, as I see it, are making the same mistake that their theatrical colleagues are making, but on the other side of the fence. Where the latter are attempting to sell to the public plays that are too dull and stupid, the former are attempting to

sell pictures that, while grantedly dull and stupid, are yet not sufficiently dull and stupid. The lower one goes in the social and intellectual scale—and the bulk of movie audiences is as low as one can descend in this direction—the more dulness and stupidity become invaluable commercial assets. Yet what do the film purveyors do? Instead of catering to dulness with dulness, they attempt to cater to it either with comparative lack of dulness or with diluted dulness. The result, of course, is failure. What the mass of motion picture audiences wants is dulness unadulterated. A man brought up on corned beef and cabbage does not know what to do with *contre filét de bœuf Macedoine*: he wants corned beef and cabbage. A movie patron brought up on tales of small country girls who marry rich and handsome fellows from the city, of cowboys who save daughters of ranch owners from unshaved Mexican seducers and are rewarded with embraces on the sky-line at sundown, and of web-footed comedians who fall into flour barrels and come up looking like the return of Peter Grimm—a movie customer so educated has no stomach for Mr. Ignatz Goldfarb's chorus of novelists herded together at Hollywood or for Maurice Maeterlinck, Elinor Glyn and other such imported mystics. This, however, the screen managers persuade themselves to disbelieve, and to the loss of deplorably large sums of wampum.

What the screen needs is a greater capitalization of dulness. And since it is well known that I am always a constructive critic, I offer a suggestion. A small one, true, but one that will indicate more or less precisely what I am driving at.

Take, in this specific regard, the so-called motion picture news weeklies and news digests. What is their obvious defect? Their obvious defect—and the reason for their failure to make as much money as they ought to make—is their quality of interest. To present the dozen most interesting news events of an entire week to an audience of

movie morons in less than *ten minutes* of running time is clearly putting a ridiculous strain upon such an audience. The audience, paradoxically enough, is so crowded and confounded by the rapid succession of interests that it fails to be interested at all. It is, in this respect, precisely like a man before whose eyes one whirls rapidly a dozen brilliant colors. The man is unable to see each of the brilliant colors: all that he sees is a confused jumble of the colors. But the entrepreneurs of the news weeklies and digests do not recognize this fact, and to their loss. What they should present to their patrons is not a weekly or digest made up of the most interesting news events of the week, but one made up of the most *uninteresting* news events of the week. I offer, therefore, the initial number of *The Snooze Weekly*. The board of editors of *The Snooze Weekly*, experts in dulness, will gather weekly from over five hundred American newspapers those events in the daily news that are most likely to bore any audience (save a movie audience) to death. Nothing that might conceivably interest anyone except a devotee of movie parlors will under any circumstances be permitted to get by the *Weekly's* proficient board of censors.

THE SNOOZE WEEKLY

1.

Sol Rachvitzki, age 8, and Herman Fishbender, age 11, were arrested yesterday for stealing blackboard erasers from Public School No. 4.

—*St. Paul Dispatch*.

2.

William Jennings Bryan spoke in Toledo, Ohio, on Wednesday.

—*Chicago Tribune*.

3.

Mr. and Mrs. Mose Blumblatt, of No. 241 Cedar Street, announce the engagement of their daughter Ida to Irving C. Rosenberg, of Beaver Falls, Pa.

—*Cleveland News*.

4.

Registrations at the clubhouse at Virginia Hot Springs include Edward F. Pooley, of New York.

—*By Telegraph to the New York Herald*.

5.

Cable reports announce that Ugo VekkHziz has been appointed Bolshevik leader in the Nojdevlz district.

—*New York Times*.

6.

Policeman Gus Pintz, of the Third District Station of Pottstown, is the proud father of a pair of twins.

—*Allentown, Pa., Record*.

7.

Irish enthusiasts attempted to hoist the Irish flag yesterday on a building in Balingarry, but were prevented from doing so by the officials.

—*By Cable to the Philadelphia Public Ledger*.

8.

The body discovered floating in the Ohio River on Wednesday and believed to have been that of Pietro Giolotti, an Italian street laborer, has been identified as that of Pietro Giovanni, an Italian street laborer.

—*Cincinnati Enquirer*.

9.

Dr. Robert E. Speer, of the Board of Foreign Missions, delivered a sermon in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church on Sunday in which he stated that "It is the business of the Church to bear witness to what it believes to be fundamental moral and social principles, and to develop the moral and social energies that would best carry out the ideals of Christianity."—*New York Tribune*.

10.

Ex-Emperor William of Germany took a long walk into the country on Thursday.—*Special Correspondence of the Des Moines Capitol*.

11.

The schooner Zebedee E. Cliff arrived here on Monday from Baltimore.

—*Tampa, Fla., News*.

12.

The three points on the Black Sea coast at which Greek forces were landed last week are Ineboli, Sinope and Inzerli.

—*Associated Press Dispatch*.

13.

"Prohibition is here to stay," announced Wayne B. Wheeler, chief counsel of the Anti-Saloon League, in the course of an address to the Chamber of Commerce on Saturday.—*Birmingham, Ala., Age-Herald*.

14.

William Jennings Bryan spoke in Columbus, Ohio, on Thursday.—*Washington Post*.

15.

The Greek national debt is now 18,726,-835,210 drachmas.—*Boston Transcript*.

16.

President Harding passed through here on Friday. A crowd gathered at the railroad station and cheered the Chief Executive, who responded by smiling and waving his hat.
—*Wilmington, Del., Record.*

17.

Abraham L. Wimpheimer has been elected second vice-president of the Empire Underwear Co. of Troy, N. Y.
—*Cloak and Suit News.*

18.

Astronomers in the Lick Observatory now announce that the new planet Betelguese is not 32,875,326 miles in circumference, but 32,875,327.—*Springfield, Mass., Republican.*

19.

A dinner of the Friends of Freedom for India was held on Friday night in the Ceylon Restaurant, 672 Eighth Ave.
—*New York Globe and Commercial*

20.

The bicycle races scheduled at the Velodrome on Wednesday were called off on account of rain. The meet was started, but the rain came down so hard every one had to seek cover after one amateur event had been run off.—*Newark, N. J., Call.*

§ 4

The Professions.—The dignity of the learned professions, always assumed in discussions of them, succumbs quickly to analysis. What, realistically described, is the function that a clergyman performs in the world? In brief, he gets a living by convincing idiots that he can save them from a mythical hell. It is a business, at bottom, almost indistinguishable from that of selling Texas oil stocks. As for a lawyer, he is simply, under our cash-register civilization, one who teaches scoundrels how to commit their swindles without risk. As for a physician, he is one who spends his whole existence trying to prolong the lives of persons whose deaths, in nine cases out of ten, would be a public benefit. The case of the pedagogue is even worse. Consider him in his highest incarnation: the university professor. What is his function? Simply to pass on to fresh generations of numskulls a body of so-called knowledge that is fragmentary, unimportant

and, for the most part, untrue. His whole professional activity is circumscribed by the prejudices, vanities and avarices of his university trustees, *i.e.*, a committee of soap-boilers, nail-manufacturers, bank-directors and politicians. The moment he offends these vermin he is undone. He cannot so much as think aloud without running a risk of having them fan his pantaloons.

There was a time when the profession of arms was honorable, but that is surely no longer true in America. The corps of officers of the United States Army seems to be fast sinking to the estate and dignity of a gang of long-shoremen. One never picks up a newspaper without reading of the arrest of some officer or ex-officer for an offense involving dishonor. Not long ago one of them was hanged for murder. A few days later another one, in prison for the same crime, asked for a pardon on the ground that, in the region where he was brought up, murder was not regarded as criminal. Swindles, defalcations, rowdiness, drunkenness, extortions, cruelties—such offenses are so common that they pass almost unnoticed. Some time ago, writing in this place, I ventured the guess that the democratization of the officers' corps was to blame—that the introduction into it, by competitive examination, of youths unaccustomed to the amenities of civilization had destroyed the spirit left in it by Washington and Lee. But perhaps there is a more profound cause. Democracy, I daresay, is fundamentally opposed to that fine tradition of caste, that conscious superiority to ordinary temptations and ordinary aspirations, which makes the officer and gentleman. Warfare, as carried on by democracies, is inevitably polluted by the moral rages of inferior men. It converts itself into a sort of gang-fight, with bawling, yelling and biting in the clinches. Above all, it rejects the old ideal which prescribed an unimpassioned and chivalrous view of the enemy. Thus it grows less and less attractive to the old type of soldier. The general of tomorrow will be far more the evangelist and

rabble-rouser than the gallant knight. And his officers, departing more and more from the type of Prince Eugene, will come closer and closer to the type of the Y. M. C. A. secretary.

§ 5

Clubs.—The problem currently confronting men's clubs is a perplexing one. With the advent of Prohibition the chief *raison d'être* of the club received a custard pie in the ear. Today, there is next to no reason for a man to enter his club. He may use it as a place to get secret mail and telephone communications from his other girl, or to get breakfast when his Jap is drunk, or to read *The Bystander* and *The Illustrated London News* on such evenings as his best friend's wife believes he has already grafted enough free dinners, but beyond this there is nothing the club has to offer him. And surely these benefits are hardly worth the amount of his annual dues—to say nothing of a heavy initiation fee. As a result, the club member today enters his club, on the few occasions he does enter it, with a wholesome grouch, and this grouch is the problem the club has to face. It must do twice as much for its member as it did in the gay old drinking days, and what to do and how to do it is its serious puzzle. Upon the solution of this puzzle, its life rests.

§ 6

Things Worth Another Look.—I append a list of things, either little known or infrequently recalled, that are worth a second reading:

1. The love letter of Lord Byron printed by Elbert Hubbard in *The Philistine* about twelve years ago.
2. Arthur Bingham Walkley's essay on Sarah Bernhardt, written thirty-two years ago.
3. Edwin Lefèvre's short story, "Without End," published in *The Saturday Evening Post* some ten years ago.
4. "Ashes to Ashes," by James G. Sander-son, printed in the first number of *THE SMART SET* under the present editorial direction.

5. The poem, "Oxiline," recently published by a group of public-spirited citizens of Miami, Oklahoma.

6. The scene of farewell in the last act of George Bernard Shaw's "Cæsar and Cleopatra."

7. Lord Dunsany's three-hundred-word sketch, "Assignment."

8. Alfred Stevens' observations on art.

9. John Palmer's essay on "Comedy."

10. The third, twenty-second and thirty-sixth epigrams in Charles Edward Jerningham's collected "Maxims of Marmaduke."

11. Von Hofmannsthal's little play, "Death and the Fool."

12. Socrates' philosophy of marriage.

§ 7

The Test.—An incurable snob by nature, I find myself constantly seeking criteria whereby to detect and classify the sort of men it pleases me to sniff at. Nine or ten years ago I employed a sort of intellectual Wassermann reaction that had the late Col. Roosevelt as its reagent. All those men who regarded Roosevelt as a charlatan had the honor, if they were so inclined, of drinking with me; all those who viewed him with enthusiasm were imperceptible to my eye. This test was subtle; it fetched many fair-seeming citizens of the Republic—many, many more than the Billy Sunday test, or the Prohibition test, or the Massenet test, or the Socialism test, or the champagne test. But I use it no longer, for I have found a better one.

This better one involves finding out what the subject thought of the late Dr. Wilson's bogus idealism in the days of its highest prosperity—in particular, how he took Wilson's statement of war aims. If he can prove that he was hep to the fraud from the start, and made no concealment of his agnosticism, then I am very glad to invite him to my studio, and to offer him a civilized drink, and to treat him as an equal. But if he was one of those who sobbed and snuffled over that blather, then I find it quite impossible, no matter what his merits in other ways, to regard him as other than a hopeless ass. A recantation does not alter the matter. The most pathetic of all such asses, indeed,

are those who first swallowed the buncombe, and then melodramatically threw it up—those who now plead that the *doctor mellifluus* fooled them. I know many such men who are amiable and of undoubted virtue, but I find it impossible to contemplate even the most worthy of them without snickering.

§ 8

On Medals and Awards of Honor.—As we hurry through life, let us recall that Lea and Perrins have just as many pretty medals as General Douglas Haig, and Crosse and Blackwell three times as many as General Ferdinand Foch.

§ 9

On Bad Authors.—The United States Government issues regular reports upon the weather, the death-rate, the state of the Treasury, the number of hogs on the farms, the condition of the cotton crop and the rise and fall of the cost of living, and very soon, under the new Maternity Act, it will publish bulletins showing the number of *enceinte* women in the country on the first day of each month, but in the field of the arts its statistical frenzy seems to dry up. I have never encountered a Government report upon the batik industry, or upon vers libre, or upon the number of piano-pupils in Iowa, or upon the crop movement of Middle Western old maids into Greenwich Village, or upon the annual production of bad short stories.

This last interests me professionally. A great many of the bad short stories written in the United States every year come to my desk, and I have to look through them. Now and then I read one. Awful stuff, indeed. Nearly all the worst authors announce on their manuscripts that they are members of the Authors' League; most of them show plain signs in their writing of having passed through one of the short story colleges that now sprinkle the land. The influence of these seminaries deserves to be investigated by some

literary pathologist. How they manage their teaching I do not know at first hand; I can judge only by their text-books and by the stuff composed by their students and graduates. So far as I can remember I have never read such a text-book that was not idiotic, nor encountered such a graduate who was not totally incompetent. Nor have I ever heard of a teacher in such a school who could write decently himself (or herself). Just as the colleges of journalism are chiefly manned by senile editorial writers and discharged copy-readers, so the colleges of fiction seem to be operated by pedagogues who are unable to practise what they profess to teach. Some of them, I am convinced, are honest enough; their professors apparently believe fully in their own tosh. But others are full of the flavor of the bucket-shop, the Y. M. C. A. drive, and the lemon-squeezing music publishing houses.

I doubt that the instruction they offer is worth a single damn. All their elaborate gabble about structure, motives, sub-motives, atmosphere and so on is sheer buncombe. Whatever is sound in it is sensed instinctively by any author with a genuine story to tell—for example, that the story must engage the reader's curiosity and attention in the first paragraph. This is the only rule of short story writing that has any logical or evidential basis—and even it is occasionally broken. All the other rules are nonsensical. Turn to the great masterpieces of Joseph Conrad, and you will find them disregarded wholesale. The only effect of parading them before novices is to make the writing of these novices self-conscious and artificial. This is what ails most of the bad short stories that fill the popular magazines. They are not the product of artists with genuine ideas; they are simply the product of artisans trying to work out jig-saw puzzles. It is the rarest thing in the world to find a character in them who is alive. Their people are all dummies, just as their situations are all absurd. What the pedagogues actually teach

is not the writing of sound fiction, which is an art, but the manufacture of disguised movie-scenarios, which is no more an art than barbering. There are barbers who are superlatively competent (though surely not many: in New York I have never found one), but only an imbecile would call them artists.

I believe that the influence of this movie-scenario trade is largely responsible for the bad writing that comes out of Los Angeles, a phenomenon on which I discoursed some time ago. No other American city of its size seems to produce a tenth of the short story manuscripts that pour out of Los Angeles weekly. Every third human being there seems to suffer from an acute literary mania. But when a good manuscript happens to come from the town it seems almost as surprising as a good manuscript from, say, Florida or Arkansas. Even perfectly competent authors, when they are drawn to Los Angeles by the huge sums to be made writing for the movies, begin to write badly. I used to think that the climate was to blame—too balmy and lazy, too much sunshine and rose-scent. But I found that this impression was supported, not by the meteorological facts, but simply by the blather of press-agents trying to attract frost-bitten Nebraska steer-stuffers. Then I began to blame the New Thought—but wasn't it rampant in New England at the time of the *éclaircissement*? Then the swinish carnality of the place—but isn't New York even more bawdy? There remains the influence of the movies. They demand a style of writing that is frankly idiotic; to try to get even the smallest modicum of sense into it at once imperils a movie writer's livelihood. Six or eight months of that clowning, and he has lost whatever cunning he had at the start. It is no more possible to write a movie scenario with one hand and a "Heart of Darkness" with the other than it would be to sit down to a dinner at the Ritz ten minutes after arising from a fried beefsteak and boiled potatoes.

S. S.—Jan.—4

§ 10

After the War to End War.—Chorus of Socialists: "To hell with capital!" Antiphon of anti-Socialists: "To hell with 'Das Kapital'!"

§ 11

Modern Advertising.—It often occurs to me to speculate on the men who are entrusted with the job of writing and editing the advertisements of the large American commercial organizations. In looking through these advertisements in the magazines and newspapers, I am given pause by the considerable amount of idiotic stuff incorporated in them. I frequently wonder if the company officials themselves ever read their own advertisements.

For example, in the current large advertisements of the Victor Talking Machine Company, setting forth the virtues of the Victrola, I find this line conspicuously featured: "Public approval follows artistic leadership." What could be more senseless? Public approval generally does nothing of the sort, and nine persons out of ten who read the advertisement are aware of the fact. Again, in an advertisement of the Seth Thomas Clock Company, I note the following: "In 1813 the United States was at war to maintain the principles established by the Revolution. In that period men and purposes passed through the furnace. Genuineness alone survived." Here, more bosh. If genuineness of purpose alone survived the war of 1812—from the Seth Thomas Clock Company's point of view—what, the reader may inquire of the Seth Thomas Clock Company, happened to England? The reader is unaware that anything happened.

"In industry, art, science, good results require good implements kept in good condition," reads the advertisement of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. Still more nonsense. Arnold Bennett wrote "The Old Wives' Tale" with the only miserable pens that he could find in a little

town in France. The story of Fulton and his wretched implements is known to every reader of the Telephone Company's advertisement. There are hundreds of other examples. We turn from this advertisement to that of Stephen F. Whitman and Son. Here we find: "Care in selecting the proper package of Whitman's chocolates to fit the occasion wins golden opinions." This is enough to make any advertisement reader above the grade of moron laugh. Consider the phrase "golden opinions." Consider, further, the bestowal of "golden opinions" upon a person because that person is gifted with the amazing and esoteric genius for discriminating between chocolate drops with cream in them and chocolate drops with nuts in them.

The advertisement of the Pratt and Lambert Varnish Products Company begins thus:

"Betsy, you'll ruin me yet! When did you buy that desk?"

"Why, Tommy Boy, that's the little old desk Mother gave us when we started house-keeping. I just gave it two coats of Gray Vitralite."

Illustrating this fetching dialogue is a drawing of a prosperous couple immaculately dressed, the man in particular. The illustration showing the article of furniture that would ruin the man is the sort of desk that may be purchased from any Sixth Avenue dealer for about twenty dollars.

The Pepsodent Dentifrice Company's advertisement offers gratis a ten-day trial tube of tooth paste and goes on to announce that "Millions of people have accepted this free offer—have made this ten-day test." In other words, the advertisement asks its reader to believe that at least one person out of every one hundred in the United States has sent in the attached coupon for the free tube of Pepsodent tooth varnish. What reader will for a moment believe such extravagant statistics?

I have picked these advertisements not from this journal and that, care-

fully and shrewdly to prove my point, but haphazardly from the pages of the periodical that happens to be closest at hand. There are any number of other advertisements in it that reveal a similar dosage of nonsense. In fact, the one and only well-constructed and convincing advertisement in the whole magazine is that of the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company. It consists simply of a clear picture reproduction of the automobile with the words "Pierce-Arrow, 7 Passenger" printed beneath it.

Take another phase of the subject. The *Nation* is a periodical that addresses itself exclusively to the *intelligentsia*. It assumes that all of its readers are educated, and that it reaches them when they are in their most thoughtful mood. One could no more imagine a Follies girl reading it than one could imagine a stockbroker, a subway ticket-chopper or the Hon. Warren Gamaliel Harding reading it. Such a publication, appealing thus directly to an audience of a narrowly special kind, is obviously valuable as an advertising medium. In particular, it must be an extremely valuable advertising medium for the publishers of serious books. Such books, in so far as they are read at all in the United States, are read by the sort of folks who take the *Nation*, the *Freeman*, and the *New Republic*. . . .

Well, let us see. I pick up, at random, an issue of the *Nation* and find that only two American publishers take so much as a page of space in it. One of them devotes all of his space to a flaming advertisement of Dr. Charles W. Eliot's celebrated Five-Foot Shelf of Books—a yellow journal sensation of ten or fifteen years ago. His main argument is that anyone may obtain "the essentials of a liberal education" by devoting but fifteen minutes a day to plowing through these tomes. The other publisher gives over the largest portion of his space to booming a gaudy novel whose hero is an ancient Roman "bandit, conspirator and beast-tamer," who was "imprisoned and shipwrecked,

the victim of many attempts at assassination, and again and again condemned to death, but always miraculously escaped, either through a conspiracy of unusual circumstances, or the uncanny power which he possessed over wild beasts."

Consider the matter soberly. Imagine a man paying \$5 a year to receive the *Nation* weekly, and then imagine him simultaneously trying to get a canned education by reading in Dr. Eliot's volumes for fifteen minutes a day, and diverting himself thereafter by gobbling the history of that primeval Buffalo Bill! . . . But the choicest tid-bit remains. The largest advertisement in this issue of the *Nation*, following the book advertisements, is a quarter-page announcement of a new greaseless vanishing face cream!

§ 12

More Interlocking Directorates.—Complete record of the feats of joinery performed by the Hon. Sam Gompers, from "Who's Who in the Nation's Capital":

Washington Chamber of Commerce (publicity committee).
Monday Evening Club.
National Geographic Society.
Cigarmakers' International Union (1st vice-president).
Cigarmakers' local, No. 144.
Civic Forum.
Immigration Restriction League.
American Political Science Association.
National Tuberculosis Association.
Lincoln Memorial Farmers' Association.
American Academy of Political and Social Science.
Friends of Russian Freedom.
National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis (director).
Comité Permanent Internationale des Assurances Sociales.
National Soil Fertility League (advisory board).
International Congress on Hygiene and Demography.
American Agricultural Association.
International Association for Mothers' Day (advisory committee).
National Committee on Prison Labor (councillor).
Luther Burbank Society (honorary).
International Congress on Social Insurance

(vice-chairman committee on organization; program committee of executive committee).
National Civic Federation (chairman committee on labor conditions, industrial economic department; advisory council of industrial economic department).
American Sociological Society.
Anti-Tuberculosis Society (Chicago branch).
People's Fish and Game Protective Association of California (consulting board).
National Board of Censorship of Motion Pictures (advisory committee).
National Educational Motion Pictures Association (honorary vice-president).
New York State Factory Investigating Commission.
National Editorial Faculty.
Academy of Pictorial Education (incorporator).
American Peace Centenary Committee.
Institute of Educational Travel (advisory board).
Committee on Federal Constitution.
Clisophic Society of Princeton University (honorary).
American Educational and Vocational Training Conference.
New York City Board of Education (committee on vocational schools).
Joseph A. Holmes Memorial (temporary executive committee).
Women's Clinic Auxiliary.
"In Her Name" Society (vice-president).
Congress of Forums (advisory board).
Children of America Loyalty League (honorary national vice-president).
Michigan Press Club (honorary).
National Institute of Social Science.
Safety Institute of America (advisory committee for restoration of arsenal building).
American Field of Honor Association.
Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks.
Victory Mountain Park Committee of 100.
Army, Navy and Civilian Board of Boxing Control.
American Central Committee for Russian Relief.
General Advisory Committee on Industrial Safety Codes.
English-Speaking Union.
National Committee of America's Gift to France.
National Press Committee for D. C. Suffrage (advisory council).
Americanization Exposition (committee on committees and international co-operation).
League of Nations Union (honorary vice-president).
American Red Cross (roll-call committee).
American Committee for Devastated France (board of directors).
Masonic Order (32nd degree, Shrine).
Odd Fellows (Stephen A. Douglas Lodge).
Elks.

§ 13

On the Reliability of Statistics.—For years I have been reading about the hundreds of thousands of visitors who swarm into New York every day from all the four quarters of Boobaria. Usually the number is put at 100,000; sometimes a particularly enthusiastic town statistician lifts it to 250,000, or 300,000, or even 500,000. I have read column after column in the town papers about the influence of these great battalions of hinterlanders upon the life of Manhattan—their support of the Follies and the Hippodrome, their encouragement of swindling in the

hotels and restaurants, their boosting of prices in the shops, their nightly revels in the Broadway stews. . . .

Some time ago an outlaw statistician, suddenly revolting against the immemorial habit of his order, bethought him to look into the actual figures. He found that all the hotels of New York, crowded to their utmost capacity, could accommodate but 54,000 guests a night—and that fully a half of their nightly guests were New Yorkers. He found that all the express trains coming into New York daily, bearing their average loads, brought in but 26,000 passengers—and that this number included all the New Yorkers returning to New York.



The Insult

By Charles G. Shaw

HER skirts ended three inches above her knees and her stockings were of openwork silk.

Her little pink toque was perched on one ear.

Her face was powdered, her eyelashes smeared with cosmetic, and her lips rubily rouged.

"Officer," she said, "I want you to arrest that man! He's been staring at me for five minutes."



A WOMAN likes to believe that she is marrying one man to forget another. A man, that it is one woman to forget all others.



Pursuit

By Morris Dallett

I

FROM where he was sitting, from the terrace of a villa on the slope of the low Sierra de Marocha, he could see the ocean, an expanse of green edged with white. It beat upon the rocky shore of this particular part of Laragan with a more than ordinary force, sometimes hurling white petals into the air, white petals and spray which, as the sun caught it, became a veil of rainbow colors, sparkling and fresh, before sinking back into a receding wave.

On both sides of him, there were trees and houses. On his left was the end of the city, a group of cobalt blue, pink and yellow stucco buildings which were bright against a background of tropical greenery. His right was less broken in color; the vivid tone of the vegetation raised straight to the top of the hills until it suddenly came, with amazing violence, to the purest blue sky. Nearer the water on the same side was a stretch of land with the Hotel America, a solitary place in the center of the tiny peninsula, the extremity of which was concrete and afforded a landing for small craft.

He had been looking at this hotel for some time, since, in fact, luncheon two hours before. He had come out here directly upon rising from a solitary meal: his host was away until the following evening. And he had tried to find some signs of life in that flesh-colored dwelling where, in all probability, his wife was staying.

He had not, however, succeeded. And yet he was not surprised, for he had hardly expected to see any. This was

the time for a siesta. All Laraganians rested now, if not at eleven in the morning as well.

His wife, Helen, would not, he had decided, be an exception to the rule. Having lived in this strange country for two years she was doubtless following convention.

"She never was the exception," he murmured to himself.

Then he thought about rising. In spite of the awning over him, he was hot. The sun reflected on the colored tiles of the terrace was almost as warm as if it had come to him directly.

He did move finally, getting up from the wicker chair and walking slowly to a tall doorway which led to an enclosed garden, a patio, with rooms opening onto it. As he went, he felt the heat more intensely.

"Too old to change to this climate," he thought to himself.

Notwithstanding a frame remarkably upright and strong for a man past forty, he was too old to come from New York and be comfortable in a perpetual shade of eighty degrees.

The mere vision of New York, covered with snow now in January, was enough to make him think about catching the *Delilah*, which would sail in two days for home. It would mean leaving his business unfinished. Also it might mean not seeing his wife, his former wife.

No, he would stay. But he would have a drink immediately.

He rang a bell in the large room where he had come. And when a slouchy servant appeared, he ordered a whiskey and soda.

It was while he was imbibing this

that he turned his attention to plans for seeing his wife. He had come here ostensibly for business, but really to meet her.

She had said that it would be possible. He was to visit Alvarez, and at that time she would be at the America Hotel. Her husband would be away, putting the last touch to an engineering job he had been working on for over a year.

"We can talk," her letter had said, "about home. Heaven knows I am thirsting for news. It seems ages since I came here. Of course, with Fritz, I am very happy. But do come. I know that it's unconventional, but we have been unconventional, writing to each other since the divorce. It is really a very sensible idea. This climate is making me old quickly, and if you do want to see me for old time's sake, come as you have planned. I don't want to have you ask directions of a hag and find that she is your previous wife."

He took out the letter and read it now. He had been carrying it in an inside pocket, and the ink had run: it looked as faded as if he had received it ten years ago.

But ten years ago he had been married. He had been married, and they had been happy. Even so long after, he could not understand what had ever made them fall apart. She had gone with one group of people, he with another.

Then they had found that they were strangers, and she had told him that she was wasting her time. He had answered, as she had wished, by living away from her for three years, at the end of which period she had got her divorce.

It had all been perfectly friendly, and she had married again, a man years younger than herself, an engineer who had brought her here, after wandering over a good part of the world. At present, if he remembered correctly, she would be thirty-seven.

Yes, the affair was quite sensible.

He had realized that her wish to see him was a sensible one as soon as he had left the ship. It had reached port

the night before last, about two o'clock. He had been going to bed when the doctor, a nice chap with whom he had become great friends—they were of the same age—had sauntered around to his cabin and announced that Marocha was in sight.

He had slipped on a dressing-gown to go forward. And from there he had seen lights—ashore. After two weeks at sea the sight had been welcome, had been stimulating. He had gone to the saloon, dressed as he was, as there were no women passengers, for a drink and an hour's discussion with the doctor.

The following morning, coming in near twelve, making out the painted houses, the curious life of the port settlement, he had felt that her request that he come to her now was as it should be. She was changing, changing in more ways than age. And she had wanted to find a few of the old, familiar things, names and places and streets, to reassure herself.

He was bringing them. It was far from romantic. The simple idea of a former husband visiting her carried no ulterior emotions.

"Quite right," he thought now. There would be nothing queer about it. He would talk about her friends, and she would listen.

He drank the last few drops of his whiskey and soda and stood up. He would walk in the direction of the hotel now. Not to see her, as he told himself, but merely to discover the lay of the land.

When he wanted to see her, he would announce his presence beforehand.

He left the entrance to the villa and continued down the winding white road that led directly to a highway that ran beside the ocean. He had been able to make out a path that led from this to the hotel.

The trees and shrubs he passed were strange to him, and he looked at them with a certain curiosity. *Bougainvillias*, *gaius*, here and there a magnificent almond tree, contributed to a scene so different to those he was accustomed to in his own country that he was

forced to wonder at the reality of his position.

It seemed no less than positively unbelievable that he had come into such an unknown place. It seemed especially unbelievable in view of the fact that he was his usual self.

The impending interview, on the other hand, would not be remarkable. And yet he had not seen his wife for a long time—for seven years.

What had she looked like? he found himself wondering. For the life of him, he could not remember. He could recall, to be sure, details: he could recall her dresses lying over his chairs, her clothes in his closets, her hairpins all over the bathroom floor.

Once he had been irritated by those things. Now, in some way, they sounded interesting.

But the woman herself, what could he remember of her?

"A pair of very long black silk stockings, an annoying habit of talking in a theatre, and the brand of cigarettes she smoked."

He was very complacent when he reached the path that led off the main highway. He was so complacent, so tranquil, that, without thinking, he stopped and stood contemplating the hotel.

That was where his wife was.

Then he started, started as suddenly as if he had caught himself making a supreme mistake. He must move on.

He went farther down the road. He was now simply anxious to appear casual. He did not want, certainly, any gossip to bother her. She had always minded that. Her fear of other people's opinion had been another matter on which they had never agreed.

How small those things seemed now! Was that really all that had been the trouble? There must be something else, something about her personality in connection with him.

He could remember nothing, not even her face. She had brown hair, a tremendous amount of brown hair as fine as living silk. She had been proud of it. Yes, they had quarreled over that.

She must have been very irritating, somehow.

It was, after all, as she had said, unconventional for them to meet again. It had been unconventional for them to carry on a desultory correspondence. The latter, on the other hand, had arisen naturally. She had wanted a prescription; he had mailed it to her. She had wanted an address; he had sent it to her.

He had wanted an address; she had sent it to him. And so on. Finally they had got into the habit of dropping a line to each other. It had seemed natural as she was traveling. And he had felt that it was only decent that he answer, though her messages said merely that she had reached such-and-such a place, or that she liked some other city.

Now this meeting. Perhaps it would be remarkable.

Perhaps she had already changed a great deal. An upsetting thought. *Why*, he did not know.

He was by this time extremely hot, and he turned around and began retracing his steps.

"How singular the most ordinary life is!" he exclaimed, almost aloud.

The singular part about this was that it seemed a calm enough thing, but at the same time was not calm. She was familiar and yet a stranger.

They were both getting old, he must remember that. It would be sad to find her haggard and ugly.

And then he looked up. He was at the path again; there was a woman standing in the shadow of a tall almond tree, and she beckoned to him.

II

His first thought was not "This is my wife." His first thought was that he had been mistaken for someone else. The impression was so strong that he looked over his shoulder to see who it might be. But there was no one.

Then he knew. That figure in white was Helen, and he became nervous.

"I'm looking badly," he thought to himself. Then he stepped forward.

"Why Helen."

"Be careful, Alex," came the warm answer.

He stood alarmed.

"Come here," she said.

Relieved to hear that there was something definite to do, he followed her directions and went to her side. He put out his hand as he did so.

She noticed the action, smiled, and gave him her hand. He felt it and was surprised at its familiar pressure.

"What on earth is the matter?" he asked. He felt a bit awkward, now that he had come close to the tree.

"I'll tell you in a minute. We can't talk here."

Her voice had a genuine anxiety in it, which he accepted without question. Nevertheless, though he had not studied her as yet, he was conscious of the fact that she was different to what he had expected. She was astonishingly young.

"We'll have to walk toward Alvarez' house, Alex."

"That's all right. He isn't there."

She looked back of them and then began walking forward quickly.

By this time he was full of questions. He was almost bursting with them. He wanted to know how she had known that he would pass by, how she was, when she had first arranged her hair the new way.

But he could not talk now, for they were hurrying up the hill. They did not stop hurrying until they had passed a bend in the road.

Then she halted abruptly.

"What excitement!" she said.

Alex halted beside her. He was fearfully hot. He was, also a little irritated at the secret necessity for such speed.

"What on earth is the matter?" he asked.

She looked at him, looked seriously, as she had used to do before they went out for a dinner.

"I'm so sorry," she announced.

"Nonsense, Helen. But why all this mystery?"

"Fritz's family is all there."

"At the hotel?"

"Yes. They appeared suddenly. I haven't yet discovered just how."

Alex finished mopping his face and stuffed his handkerchief back into his breast pocket.

"Shall we find a bench?"

"Please."

"Alvarez isn't in, but I'd hardly like to take you there. Do you know him?"

"I don't know anyone. I'm just here for a few months. This is the house, isn't it? They pointed it out to me from the hotel."

They had reached the entrance to the villa.

"He'll think that I am some little person in whom you have taken a wicked interest," she warned him.

"Good heavens, no. I'm afraid I don't look the part."

They reached the house and the terrace.

"I don't know about that," she said, regarding him critically. "You haven't grayed a bit."

He was pleased with this.

"Shall we sit in the court? It ought to be cooler. Everyone's asleep, but I think that I can get you a drink."

They proceeded to the patio and the two small iron chairs before a little café table there.

Alex felt self-conscious and elated. He was in the spirit for adventure. The trip down, the strange surroundings, this sudden meeting, were all conducive to a particularly cheerful frame of mind.

Most of all, he was curious to learn what she thought of him. He had been wondering lately exactly where he belonged, in what phase of life. Business had been his sole occupation for some years, almost since her departure, and he had become rich. But he had also become lonely.

He was amazed at the novelty of her. He was amazed at the novelty and at the same time amazed at her familiarity.

"It is as if either I had never seen her before, or else as if we had not been apart," he thought.

She was sitting now letting her eyes wander over the building.

"Alvarez is an important man here," she said, at last.

"Yes. I have discovered that. He is a splendid man to deal with."

"Has your business gone well?"

"It was settled the first ten minutes we spent together. Now there remains only a few signatures and some arrangements with the government. I'll be ready to leave the day after tomorrow."

"Are you going so soon?"

There was no regret, there was only surprise in her voice.

"There is nothing else for me to do."

"And so you'll go back to the office in New York, because there is nothing else for you to do here. Alex, you haven't changed."

"What would you have me do?"

"Travel. Look over Laragan. It's a wonderful country, and there's plenty to interest you. In Josha there's gambling. In Lire there's the Old Theatre with the most interesting entertainments in the world. Then the scenery."

"All that gets a little tiring after a while, don't you think, Helen?"

She looked away before answering.

"Yes. It does. It does if you are sensible about it. The only way to do things like that is to go wandering all over without staying longer at a place than you like."

"Not a very dignified proceeding."

"Dignified? Alex, are you beginning to think of dignity? I think it's too pitiful if you are. Why, you aren't old."

"No. But of a man in my position certain things are expected."

"I don't see what that has to do with it. How do you think I am looking? Have I changed?"

He looked at her again. "In a way you have. I was very startled when I first saw you."

"I thought so. I was afraid that you wouldn't speak to me."

"Did you see me from the hotel?"

"I've been watching for you. I was

afraid that you'd come into the hotel today or tomorrow, and my in-laws would have been shocked to death."

"At least in their eyes I have romantic possibilities."

"Gracious, yes. Don't you think that this is romantic?"

"You warned me that it was a sensible idea."

"Sensible. Of course it is sensible, too. I had to justify myself. But they would be shocked, nevertheless. Who wouldn't be? A divorced husband and wife meeting in Laragan. People don't realize that it's the people that make the thing sensible."

"This is a place for dramatics."

"Isn't it? But how do you think that I have changed?"

"I don't mean to say that you've changed. I have no idea whether or not you have. But you seem different."

"You expected to find a frump."

"You never will be that," he replied, with his ordinary air. Compliments of this order always had made her happy.

"Who can tell? In a few years anything can happen."

He looked at her, wondering exactly what she meant.

"What can happen? We have been talking about how much the same we are."

"I mean inside. Frankly, Alex, I'm growing old and I don't like to think about it."

Her appearance did not give the impression of age. Her face was clear, her figure mature and firm and womanly.

"You have merely reached your prime. I have reached my prime. But that isn't age."

"Time flies."

"Yes, it does."

She was silent for a moment. When she turned her eyes to him again, she was in a new mood.

"Tell me about my friends."

"Will you have a drink?"

She shook her head.

"Only with my meals."

So he talked to her, talked in a world as silent as death. And the afternoon

passed slowly, very slowly, while he told her gossip and truth.

She listened in a continued tranquillity. She heard of the marriages of people that had been boys and girls when she had known them.

Finally, she raised her head.

"You've made me feel a million."

"It's the heat," he retorted, mopping his face. He was very hot.

"Tonight," he went on, "I'll tell you the rest. It'll be cool. We'll sit out on the end of your peninsula."

"We can't do that, Alex."

"Why not? I'm not asking you to invite me to dinner. And I'll leave tomorrow, or the next day."

As he spoke, he was aware of a sensation of lifelessness. When he went, he would leave with her the youth that she had temporarily restored to him. Somehow, now that they were together again, she made him feel like the man who had married her.

"I've told you that my in-laws are there. I can't get off the peninsula, as you call it. There are gates that are locked at night, and if I wanted to go out alone there would be no end of talk."

"You are still afraid of gossip, then."

"In their eyes, of course. You understand. You know as well as I do that this is quite sensible."

He did not answer. He was confused.

"Isn't it?" she pursued.

A tentative flame sprang up in him. Once, he remembered suddenly, they had loved each other. And now were they indeed cold?

Her question betrayed doubts in her mind. The doubts probably came from a consideration of his feelings. And he was as if challenged by it.

"Sensible?" he repeated.

She looked at him, looked into him. Whether she read anything there or not, she gave no signs of it. She averted her eyes after a moment.

"Yes," she said, without conviction, "we're at least sensible."

"Then we shall talk this evening. If you won't come out through the

gates, I'll come in through them."

"Alex, there would be talk. You can't, really."

"Will there be anyone on the cement landing-place?"

"No. We are the only people in the hotel now."

"Then I'll land there in a boat."

"But that would be awful."

Her sentence was infinitely girlish. The word "awful" struck him as a witness to her youth. Certainly it stimulated him to a pursuit of the adventure.

"Truly," he went on, "I shall come there in a boat. Then we shall both feel young."

She hesitated.

"Why should we see each other again?" she asked quickly.

And there he was balked. Why should they see each other again?

There was no reason, no reason other than his singular desire. To revive again, not a love, but an age.

In her company, he was young. They had passed a good many periods together: they knew each other, and what he found in her, even now when they had been apart, was what he had found in her while they had been hardly more than children. While she, rather, had been no more than a child.

He could feel it now, that rejuvenation. With her he acted the boy. If not the boy, he acted the person who had married her, who had lived a honeymoon with her.

Her simple fright at the beginning, their dash for this place, her exclamation, "What excitement!" had all been things urging him to the past. And he had accepted their invitation.

For the moment, even now, he was not Alexander Reed, the rich man, the business man, devoted entirely to commerce, but he was, very plainly, the antagonist for her.

That was the reason for his seeing her again. But how could it be explained?

"Well," he began, "you were what we naïvely call my first love. Moreover, I haven't had any others."

She started to interrupt him. But

he knew what she was going to say, and he motioned her to silence.

"I know. You will say that I never loved you. Pretend, or take it for granted, then, that I never loved you. You were certainly my wife. It was with you that I started my career. Those aren't important facts, maybe, but they seem to mean something now. When I am with you I feel more or less the way I used to feel. Toward life, you understand. As you insist, we are at the sensible age. With you, however, I am not at the sensible age. I am the young fool. I want to be the young fool once again. I'll play this rowboat part and then go back to the United States and live my regular self. Now, all I ask of you is that you allow me this piece of masculine inanition and meet me at the landing-stage. Simply meet me. Then we'll talk for an hour and look at the stars. I may even make love to you. The sky at night does strange things. But you can laugh at that and tell me to go away. When you have persuaded me to go, I shall do so. I may ask you to kiss me good-bye. When we were younger I used to ask such favors. But, of course, you will refuse me."

He looked at his former wife, and she was not smiling.

He was glad that she was not smiling, for it would have been tragic. As it was, her pensive attitude suggested some sort of companionship. In other words, she understood him.

He was surprised, on the other hand, at his own declaration. Once he had often spoken to her as fully. But since their divorce, which, just now, stood veiled as the most mysterious thing in the world, he had grown accustomed to brusque answers. He had grown accustomed, furthermore, to doing without discussions concerning intimate things like his age and his feelings. And to be able to return so naturally, so unaffectedly to them, was not a fact to be taken without suspicion.

"Perhaps I'm getting maudlin," he suggested to himself.

He dismissed the idea immediately.

What he had said had been unemotional and quiet. It had been sincere. Therefore he had been justified in speaking.

But, after all, what justified it was her pensiveness. She was leaning on the table, her heavy dark hair low on a white forehead that had never been high. Her eyes were lost, and her lips were parted in a manner he had always disliked, a former irritation.

If she had continued the silence much longer, he would have argued himself out of his sincerity. He would have grown as cold as he had previously been; would have realized, as he did not realize, that until a few weeks ago he had never had any particular desire to meet her.

But she responded.

"All right, Alex, we'll forget a good deal and remember a good deal, and 'pretend' for once. I don't know that we can, but I'll try. I'll put a light with a red cloth—a red dress, if you're curious—in my window. From out there you can see it, can't you? My room is on this side of the hotel. That is, if I can get off. But they may not go to bed early, and if they don't, I can't meet you."

"When will you put this dramatic lamp in the window?" he asked.

She looked at him as if to question his seriousness.

"Before ten. If it isn't there before ten, give up all hope."

She smiled, and he smiled, though they were both anything but amused.

There was more she left unsaid. He could see it as they walked together back toward the hotel.

When he left her, at the turn, he knew for certain.

She seemed to have been awakened.

Well, he would know, this evening!

III

DINNER was tedious.

The hours before it had been more tedious. He had smoked a number of cigars and had tired himself walking up and down in the shade of the gabled

patio. Then, with remarkable precision, he had chosen clothes for the evening.

He had not chosen a dinner coat, but a loose suit of grey flannel. To go with it he had taken a soft shirt and a sky-blue knitted tie. Black socks and brown shoes completed the costume. He looked well.

His mental condition was rather singular. For he was bewildered, and he could not think. He could not extricate himself from the mood into which Helen had thrown him.

He knew one thing: he was, because he had wanted to, going to see her, see her under a dark tropical sky, alone.

The possibility that he might not be adequate to the situation several times threw him into such a nervous state that he earnestly considered drinking himself to sleep straightway.

But he hadn't done it, and dinner was over at last.

He was on the terrace with a cigar. He had been afraid that he would not want to smoke and he needed to smoke. He even held on to his cigar more tightly than usual. And, just after lighting it, he puffed two or three times to assure himself that his mouth was not so dry that the taste of tobacco was nasty.

The truth was that he was nothing less than scared.

At half-past nine he hated the whole business.

"What do I want to see her for?" he asked himself. And he could not understand now why he had wanted to see her.

About nine, for the first time since he had noticed the surf, he found that a wind was blowing. A quarter to ten he had persuaded himself that there was too much wind to even attempt to go out in a boat.

Then, when the hour lacked five minutes of completion, a red light appeared.

"That isn't a real red," he said to himself.

"I'll tell her that I didn't see a red light," he said a second later.

Then he pictured her. It was as if

a vision had been offered him, a vision of Helen in her bedroom putting a red dress over a lamp so that he would come to her.

She was intensely desirable, and that meeting on the landing would be worth anything. Yes, he would go—gladly.

He went into his room and picked up a soft hat, which he put on his head, at an angle.

Then came the walk down to the port settlement. Ordinarily it would have taken him fifteen or twenty minutes, but tonight he did it in ten. The wind was not, he thought, so very high.

He reached the wooden wharves, where numberless boats were tied, boats that were rowed out to bring in passengers. There were men about, and he called to one who, it turned out, did not understand English.

He signed that he wanted to go out. He signaled where.

The man shook his head and blew out his cheeks: too much wind.

Alex got angry. There was not too much wind.

The fellow shook his head and smiled.

Alex waved some money before him, and in five minutes they were trying to pull away from shore.

Trying to pull away, that was all. They got outside the breakwater safely, and there they met a shore swell, a monstrous series of mountains that raised and lowered the boat as if it were a toy.

He became afraid. This was a fool's business.

The swell grew worse. The waves were ruffled by the wind, and they splashed. More than once bucketfuls came over the thwarts. The boatman said nothing.

Toppling hills of water, each as heavy as the earth, rushed up and sank below them. It was pitiful, this headway they were making.

But Helen was at the other end, and the boatman surely knew his business.

Alex leaned forward. Could they make it?

The answer was a smile, a flash of teeth visible, because Alex drew at his cigar just then. Yes, they would make the landing. It was not impossible, it was merely difficult.

Alex was not reassured, however.

Then there came a moment when his cigar went out and he realized that he would have to come back this same way. . . .

* * *

Half an hour later he was in Alvarez' villa.

"The man was a fool. Nobody could have gotten there in such rough water."

Unfortunately, he remembered the smile.

The red light was still in the window. If he had reached her, he knew now, she would have kissed him.

He shook his head.

"Too rough."

He would leave as soon as possible.

Since she had put the light there, and he had failed it, he could not see her again. All nonsense, what he had told her.

Too rough.

He got ready for bed. She had been wrong about his hair. It was graying.

Too old, rather. A few years ago he would have dared anything.

He walked to the doorway and looked up. The sky was almost white with stars. . . .

It would have been romantic. But romance was the pursuit of an illusion, and he no longer had even the illusion.

What he most needed in the world was rest. Probably she had known so. Probably she had simply made her gesture because of an infinite faith.

Yes, she had understood. She had, indeed, been sensible.

The awakening had been his.



Half Told

By Amanda Hall

*I'VE always loved a little, leaky moon,
Its tenderness too transient to endure:
I've wished that it would not grow up so soon,
So bright and buxom, healthy and mature!*

*All whole truths leave me cold. I'd have instead
Of noontime the reluctant ray of dawn,
The thought that speaks before a word is said,
The lips that smile before a laugh is born.*

*Beloved, it is well with us to-day
Since moons have grown and laughter blossomed tall,
But if I weep it is to find the way
We loved before we knew we loved at all!*



Events That Passed Before My Mind as I Was Drowning

By W. E. Sagmaster

MY first chop suey. . . . The virtuoso who broke two G and three E strings in an heroic effort to play Tschaikowski's violin concerto. . . . When I first learned the minor part the lips play in æsthetic osculation. . . . My surreptitious delving into Balzac's "Droll Stories" at the tender age of thirteen. . . . The girl to whom I gave but a passing glance until I learned, quite unexpectedly, that she was a bride of three months, and then fell madly in love with her. . . . The whistle of the bullet from her husband's Colt as it passed within two inches of my right ear. . . . My pre-adolescent conviction that the height of drama was the scene on board ship in Porter Emerson Browne's "A Fool There Was," in which Robert Hilliard gazed upon the 1906 Theda Bara with all the dumfounded adoration of a Baptist minister looking at a still-life of a stein of lager with the foam dripping over the sides; and that the height of comedy was the scene in any of the Eltinge vehicles in which the fair Julian—out of sight of the various ladies of the cast and lolling on a divan, his legs crossed in a manner so unlady-like as to divulge to the female portion of the audience all the latest in lingerie, and with a Garcia Invincivilia Grandioso stuck à la Joe Cannon in the corner of his mouth—imparts to his friend Tom,

or Dick, or Harry, as the case may be, that "I don't mind the rest of it so much, but these damned corsets are sure hell!" . . . When I discovered that the stork played no part in human birth and that Santa Claus worked in Gimbel Brothers' basement two weeks in the year and loafed in Bryant Park the rest of it. . . . My discovery, during my ride on the Giant Racer at Coney Island, that the girl from Schenectady who accompanied me was subject to fits. . . . The theme for an immortal poem which occurred to me during a dream in 1913 and which I forgot upon awakening. . . . My vain efforts to go to sleep with the light out for two months after first reading Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher." . . . The girl who loved me because I could quote Shelley. . . . The girl who loved me because I could play Ja-da on the saxophone. . . . The girl who loved me because I could wiggle my ears. . . . The free-for-all at the Murphy Social Club's Semi-Annual Dance in which I was rudely knocked through the center of the bass-viol by one of the opposition while endeavoring to climb out of a window. . . . My fruitless efforts to get perfectly, immaculately drunk. . . . My first impression of the *allegro con brio* in Beethoven's C minor. . . . My last impression of it. . . . When I stopped loving my wife. . . .



The Feet of Madame

By Caroline Brooks

I

"TO the feet of Madame, where all men kneel!"

I recall the night when a drunken poet, or a poetizing drinker (I forget which), lifted that solemn toast over her table, lifted also Madame's fairy slipper brimmed with champagne, and how Mme. Ravenel, thus divested of footgear, covertly removed her hose as well and, stepping lightly to the table, tripped with her white Cararra feet down its flowery avenue, like one who treads the dew in a cool, green garden.

Even those who did not know Reine Ravenel knew that her pet vanity was her feet. Women of intelligence are rarely at fault in the appraisal of their points, and Madame was intelligent. She was also extremely ugly. She would talk of her ugliness with a very comic distaste, as of an ugliness wholly unrelated to herself.

"Bruce," she would say, holding the gold-mounted hand-mirror she always kept in her drawing-room and peering into it with critical, near-sighted eyes, "the nose is a limb! As for the eyes—they stand out too far and see too little—like those who are curious and at the same time stupid!"

But when she spoke of her feet it was another matter. She felt affinity for her feet; often in the contemplation of their loveliness she was moved to artless tears. Their claim to beauty was never protested. Her face, always irregular, ran completely out of drawing as the years gained upon her. The eyes protruded, the nose, as she had divined, was "a limb," the mouth wide as a portcullis opening to laughter or

speech. Even her hands that spoke five languages at least were grotesque in their fluency! But her feet were famous—her frivolous feet. With them Madame gestured more adroitly than with her hands.

Small, provocative feet with a delicious diablerie, yet feet that could rhyme most gracefully in the dance, dew-twinkling, legendary feet, significant as those of Cinderella at midnight. She dressed them in every glittering fabric her fancy could hire, moon and storm-shot brocades—even the vulgarity of gems was redeemed in their dedication. Her feet and her eloquent ankles, featured in an age when neither feet nor ankles were trusted, moved men oddly. Wives feared for the psychological effect upon their husbands. In discussing the decadence of standards they mentioned Madame as a menace striking near home. They were too clean-minded to believe the best that could be thought—men looked upon her feet with superstitious reverence.

That was in the splendor of Reine's noonday while she was still so busy matching color to color of pleasure and while she was still writing life in vivid sentences and slapping an exclamation point after each one. Reine Ravenel, that Parisian transplant, was naturally as conspicuous in our New England garden as would be a hybiscus flower in a coal frame. The comparison is her own.

She sprang from the rich bourgeoisie of France. Her father was a successful manufacturer of velvet in his native country and had come to New England to double and triple his hoardings. Reine, his one child, an ugly little tartar

with a flamboyant imagination, was cast in among the temperate children of Briarsvale's most select private school and soon had boxed all the ears there were to box, hung upon the pig-tails like bell-ropes and atoned magnificently with gifts. To offset her hellishness she had laughter without stint that transformed her swarthinness into a snare and a delight. She had the expressive shoulder, the quick kiss, the naïveté so baffling to prudishness.

When she was eighteen her father led her in leash to France and, though she was all tooth and nail, married her to Ravenel, a pale young Frenchman with a pomaded patch on his upper lip and a low, flat forehead that made him look as if he had forgotten something. The two returned in dubious ill-assortment and the father clapped Ravenel straight into the factory to mold him as a manufacturer of velvet. There he was tyrannized over by the old man. At home his wife kept innumerable torpedoes under foot.

"Death mask!" she would scream at his pale face, and declare that it gave her a bad turn to look at him.

Some say that she danced poor Gaspard to death. Be that as it may, he certainly thrived ill. The American wife complex enfeebled him or a vast ennui with the intricacies of velvet-making lodged somewhere behind his low-roofed head, and the caviar which he ate at a dinner given in their honor did the rest. During the period of mourning Madame dressed her feet in black as suave as a puddle lying under a midnight moon, and would look down half smiling upon those little widowed feet as though instructing them how to behave.

From mourning slippers she graduated with a diploma of red heels and set out to take Briarsvale by storm. Her father had passed away in the interim and, thanks to her inheritance, the way was now as soft as those yards upon yards of velvet that had been wont to slide in purring splendor from his looms. From that time on Reine lived. While all about her, homes were

lined with decorum, Reine's reflected the gilded radiance of the Louis—her régime was one of idleness and luxury, French maids, perfumed poodles, the boudoir and the salon.

This to be said for Reine,—if she was self-indulgent she was equally generous. She was forever packing off a fur-coat upon the back of someone who had never before been known as a fur-bearing animal. She was extravagant, quixotic, divinely absurd, but she was loved a little more than she was hated, or rather if the concentrated love she received had been spread wide it would have a little more than outstripped the hatred felt for her.

Her life ran in cycles: now she would be hugging close her friends, filling her drawing-room with music, radiating an impression of permanency—next, unaccountably, she would be making the gesture of farewell. There would be dismay on many faces, grown blank and egg-like. How could they understand the urgency of her departure since Madame, herself, the author of the impulse, understood it so little? Quite simply she must go. She kissed the adoring young men on both cheeks, with her heartiness, her promiscuous tear dismissing the aggregate. Thence the Riviera for a year to return with an amazing wardrobe of *outré* gowns, new lines in her face of a love affair, and always the pathetic clasp of ringed fingers to her heart, "*Quel souffrance!*"

II

I WAS a bachelor of thirty when I stepped across the bright chalked circle. I am now fifty, where Reine was when we met. She liked my red Scotch hair.

"Ah, you have a burning head, my friend," she exclaimed with mock alarm and with her gem-encrusted hands shook my shoulders friendlily, "but I perceive that you have blue eyes to cool your face. That is well!"

I had been reared to tales of her spectacular lawlessness and I was of prim parentage myself but that night when she clasped my shoulders I made

her a silent gift of love. It is not to be defined. Her ugliness—her wrecked womanhood were yet more potent than the combined beauty and virtue of any other woman. She pointed me her feet, charming that night in silver slippers, and with naïve confidence asked,

"Are they not beautiful?"

I was bound to admit that they were.

"The face," she admitted ruefully, "non!" and shook out a laugh that seemed to draw a like laugh from me, buried till this excavation.

After that she might have wiped those impudent feet on my dinner coat had she liked and elicited from me only sounds of delighted insanity. Oh, yes, I would run her houseparties with a gay servility, I would string her silly, festive lanterns, rescue her reprobate poodle from the wheels of passing vehicles or pay any bill for which Madame had forgotten her purse. All in return for one warming flash of her human comradeship!

It was plain that she resented middle-aged people as a combine of jellied organisms, especially the women who hungered that she should let her figure grow old, recognize the decency of domestic obligations and give them a chance to see how gray her hair could be without dye. So Madame made a wide gesture to youth, to the boy and girl, as though to say, "I have something to tell you," and when they stood within the circle of her arms she put a scarlet poppy in the hair of the girl and a boutonnière into the lapel of the boy and the act was manifestly so pretty and sincere that it brought tears to the eyes.

*"Un peu de vie, un peu de joie,
Et puis 'bon soir'."*

Why was it given to me of all men to be intensely aware of the suffering such natures defray? Why was I always shaking my fist at age menacing this woman? For the life of me I do not know! I never condemned her when she went off to Monte Carlo to forget or to love or to do both. . . .

S. S.—Jan.—5

She now rouged frantically, wore gowns to flatter her figure and great hats with veils lowered like Venetian blinds. In vain! Only the perfect feet remained perennially young. Daily Clarice gave them the most exquisite care, the most prayerful attention and as she anointed Madame's insteps with the delicate massage cream she would repeat almost defiantly, "Feet for a sculptor!" This tribute invariably promoted Madame's smile.

"Yes, yes," she would say drily; "only a trifle travel-weary."

Oh, to be sixty-five and futile for effects! One day Madame was passing the Cathedral when the bell was ringing for mass and glancing out of her limousine let her imagination play about the idea of penitence.

"Pierre," she spoke suddenly to her chauffeur, a young Frenchman, "stop! I will go to church!"

Pierre did so and Madame, the heretic, stepped down with piety in the points of those versatile little shoes of hers. The feet pattered: they were going to pray!

Thereafter she came often and knelt in the blue hallowed cloister and talked long and fervently to God as to some wonderful, refreshing audience. . . .

She repented picturesquely of her idle, thoughtless life and found a certain freshness of direction. Here was something quite beautifully different,—she would become a religieuse. . . . Was it that the upkeep of her person was proving a profitless endeavor? Did she recognize that she was now too old to be startling in any of the original ways, only in this way could she make men and women turn their heads, could she make the jellied organisms animate—by foregoing it all, by the grand indifference, the grand gesture? Perhaps. And yet underneath it all lay that curious, contradictory grain of spiritual something which had ever made her so hard to pigeon-hole.

Madame took to wearing black robes, with long ecclesiastical ropes of beads, and a pendant cross of onyx, and when

people mouthed the word "poseur" behind her back she was acute to hear them and acutely pleased because she would soon give the lie to her alleged insincerity.

There was a commotion in every circle to see her thus walking "in the shadow of the Cathedral." She reflected upon sanctuary and received occasional hospitality at the Convent of the Sacred Love, holding converse with holy-browed women and sometimes lying several nights in a pallid cubicle with arbitrary patterns of moonlight across her counterpane. Thus to abandon herself to lonely thoughts of destiny in realms of religion was easier than to meet her marauding conscience in the dark gaiety of home. . . . And she began to feel a real yearning toward peace. Having lived to the limits of extravagance the asceticism of the life offered presented a contrast as wholesome as beef after too much *paté de foie gras*.

When she could keep her dancing devils under the lid of suppression she prayed ceaselessly. She was troubled by her duality and sweated with the stress of a day laborer to simplify her soul.

We could all see in what direction she was inevitably moving, yet our brains were not wide enough to entertain belief of that end. Madame might trail pensively into the cloister, but she would surely turn to recover daylight before the last click of the last lock had spelled banishment. I say our brains were not wide enough.

III

WHEN she had reached the point of preparing an auction of all her effects we came, we satellites, singly and in groups, to try to dissuade her. We were blind to the irony of the argument, since hitherto we had devoted our efforts to toning her down. I recall as a child how my old nurse would clasp me, a helpless prisoner, to her bosom and rock me to the tempo of a dirge that went something like this:

"You must be good, you must be good—
The dogs will come and carry you off. . . .
You must be good, you must be good. . . ."

For twenty years or more Briarsvale, like a smug duenna, had been clasping poor Reine Ravenel to its bombazine bosom and, callous to her writhings, had subjected her to its lullaby, "You must be good, you must be good—" Now it wakened precipitated and upset the rocker, "Ah, but not too good!" One must surely have a sense of balance!

When I protested that she, with her colorful nature, would languish within gray walls, that she had too much of humor in her make-up to accept literally the ritual of a nunnery, she shook her head.

"Religion is an art, *mon pauvre*. One must be simple, child-like—credulous! I have always been a believer in fairytales. . . . But I shall miss my friends and my faithful Clarice and I shall tremble a little when poor Mitzi comes barking at the gate!"

Mitzi was the last of her animated muffs, a toddling poodle who always wore a voluptuous expression when he looked at food. Madame shed a tear.

"Meetzi," she said with a sigh, "will mees his meestress. But nevaire fear; I shall set aside a sum to provide for his old age," and she tickled his ear placatingly.

I thought of Mitzi in his senility living on mutton chops and beef bones, occasionally casting the eye of a *roué* after a cat he was too lazy to chase or making a futile gesture with his paw toward a flea, sleek and comforted while Madame, with neuralgia in her old joints, told her beads or marched with the nuns to chapel. I felt I could not bear it, that something must intervene.

But nothing did and when, after the fabulous auction, Madame turned over her fortune to the sisters of The Convent of the Sacred Love I knew—we all knew that it was no use. The house was dismantled and closed, the Louis Quatorze chairs and tables became separated like families in exile and

went into sombre houses where they always presented an alien, high-flavored appearance among Heppelwhite and Chippendale. Clarice, the faithful, after thirty years of service returned to her native village in Brittany. Mitzi with his annuity gnawed opulent bones for a year or two and finally, with unseemly greed, swallowed one whole and died.

And Madame, to the mystification of the public, never ended her novitiate, never took the final veil. She had given her all; she was penitent, ready, yet always she remained the laywoman, most pathetic and sordid in her state because denied the final reward of devotion. Those hands that had never toiled scrubbed floors; that tired, shapeless figure clothed in coarse black garments labored obscurely at menial tasks and took on a load of heavy retribution. Why, having proved her sincerity, was she denied the extreme unction of nunhood? Was it that her soul fell short of being letter-perfect in the faith? None could say. After an absence of years Madame was allowed to revisit Briarsvale to see her old friends.

She came quite humbly and as she was now an old woman of a holy order I might with propriety offer her the shelter of my roof, which I did, with an aching heart of almost intolerable pity. This was not the Reine Ravenel I had known. Scarcely a spark now survived of that spirited woman. Her back was bent with toil, her hands coarsened, her old limbs uncertain, those near-sighted eyes peered waveringly. Gone was fastidiousness. Her garments smelled of the cloister, that peculiar odor of sanctity which is very nearly the odor of the grave.

And her feet—surely they were the supreme proof of penitence. I looked upon the heavy brogans, the flat, tired leather of her shoes and turned away my eyes. How had Reine ever allowed them to do that to her feet? Much to my distress she insisted upon eating in

the kitchen—she put herself on a par with my servants and made us all uncomfortable by accepting no comforts. I recognized that, through disappointment and desolation, the brilliant, negligent mind had failed.

And then—then one day it was all humorously, tragically explained to me. There was the fall of a heavy body and my housekeeper called me in helpless panic.

"It's her — the poor Madame — she came in from the street a few minutes ago and went up to her room. I think —oh, Sir, I'm certain she has been taken sick!"

We ascended in acute apprehension, opened the door of Madame's room and found, as I had feared, my poor friend lying in her musty robes, unconscious. But somehow more heartrending than her dead face, marked by a filigree of a thousand suffering lines, more poignant than the tired hands, were her feet.

I looked, I stared and the tears came streaming to unman me. For Madame in that moment before she died, secure in the privacy of her chamber, had removed the ugly black shoes with elastic inserts and there were her little feet, comely and contented in French-heeled slippers.

In that hour I knew why she had never shaped her soul for Paradise, why, though she had toiled in the cloister of the Sacred Love they had never deemed her fit to become a real member of that Holy Order of Women. Because her feet were her incurable passion and in the last analysis she could not become reconciled to their disfigurement.

Bending to compose those weary limbs, to slip a rosary into her hands, I could not but drop a tear upon the little satin-shod feet so triumphant in death. It was as though I heard the voice of Madame, the voice that long ago in naïve confidence had asked me, "Are they not beautiful?"



A Little Novel of Italy

By John V. Craven

AT Rome, in the year 1452, lived a cautious man. Inasmuch as his mistress was fair of face and possessed of hair the color of red gold, the man feared rivals. Therefore he hired a talented poisoner and introduced him into his household.

At Rome, in the year 1453, lived a poisoner. His mistress was fair of face and possessed of hair the color of red gold.



Moment

By Pierre Loving

A LONELIER windless garden than this one
I've never kissed the eyes of Beauty in . . .

*The fruit-prophetic yellow of the sun,
The gray, persuasive mists of rain,
And all that's subtle in the dew have been
Like the caress of stillness after pain.*

*Like the caress of stillness in a twilit place
With one star burning in the dusk-haired trees
Till Beauty come again, with restless hands prepared
To spin a gradual plot of summer-scented grace,
Of wind-roped bells and calyxes, of bird fret and green seas
The leaves make, churned by wind, till we, O love, are snared
Into the flaming heart of Beauty, Beauty bared.*



WHEN a man meets a woman, he is quick to catch her first name. She, his last name.



A Soiree on the Neva

By Melchior Lengyel

(Author of "Typhoon," "The Czarina," Etc.)

English Text by Benjamin F. Glazer

PERSONS

PRINCESS RUBATIN
COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE
COUNTESS ARNFELD
COUNTESS NADJA
BARON UCHTOMSKI
COUNT DETSCHOFF
COUNT KOVALOFF
BARON SMIRNOV
THE RED GUARD
THE MUSHIK
A SOLDIER
A LACKEY
A MAID

The action takes place in Petrograd in the year 1920

THE scene is a gloomy, poverty-stricken room. Shabby covers obscure the furniture. Loose-hung sheets of wrapping paper and newspaper drape the walls. The chandelier is wrapped in rags. Even the pictures are turned pathetically to the wall.

It is evening, but the room is unlighted. The moonlight filters dimly through the long windows.

At center there is a door leading into a dark hallway. Down right there is another door.

When the curtain rises, an old mushik, wearing the typical Russian blouse and trousers tucked in high boots, and carrying in his hand a lighted lantern, is intercepting Uchtomski, who is seen in the hallway through the open door at center.

MUSHIK

What do you want?

UCHTOMSKI

I am expected here.

MUSHIK

You can't come in.

UCHTOMSKI

But isn't this the home of . . . ?

MUSHIK

No. Empty house. Nobody lives here.

UCHTOMSKI

But I'm sure. . . . And yet they told me. . . .

MUSHIK

What did they tell you?

UCHTOMSKI

That the place was full of rugs, pictures, art treasures of. . . .

MUSHIK

Well, see for yourself. There's nothing here any more. Everything has been stolen.

UCHTOMSKI

Don't shout so.

MUSHIK

I can shout all I want to. Would you like me to go out in the street and shout that nobody has any business in here because everything has been carried away, stolen. . . .

UCHTOMSKI

But, my good man, try to understand me. I haven't come to steal anything. I have been invited here this evening.

MUSHIK

Ha! That's funny! You were invited! Who invited you, eh? I didn't send for you. I don't know you. Nobody lives here. Go away.

DETSCHOFF

(Appears in the hallway behind Uchtomski). Ah! You here already.

UCHTOMSKI

Yes, but this man won't let me in.

DETSCHOFF

Did you tell him the name?

UCHTOMSKI

No . . . you see, I had forgotten it.

DETSCHOFF

(To the mushik, who stands there gloweringly, like an old watchdog.) We want to see the Princess Rubatin.

MUSHIK

(Unbending suddenly.) Yes, step in, sirs. *(Stands aside to let them pass and bows.)* You will pardon me, sirs? I did not recognize you.

DETSCHOFF

This gentleman has never been here

before. But I hope you know the others.

MUSHIK

Never fear, sir. I know them well.

DETSCHOFF

They should be here very soon. Singly as usual.

MUSHIK

I know, sir. *(He exits at center, closing the door behind him.)*

(Detschhoff and Uchtomski sit down. They are dressed in absurdly long and ragged coats and shabby hats. One of them wears felt shoes; the other's feet are wrapped in rags. For a moment they are silent.)

UCHTOMSKI

It was stupid of me, but I'd really forgotten whose name I was to mention.

DETSCHOFF

Ssh! *(His gesture admonishes silence. He goes to the window. Both listen as up from the street comes a tumult, now growing louder and then suddenly subduing.)*

UCHTOMSKI

(With a sigh.) Again?

DETSCHOFF

(Comes away from the window, sighing, too.)

Yes.

(They are silent again.)

MUSHIK

(Opening the door at center.) This way, please. *(He ushers in two women who are likewise dressed in shabby top-coats and wearing shawls over their heads. They greet the men mutely and sit down.)*

UCHTOMSKI

Lord God, what a life! Like a fleeting, fantastic masquerade, a grotesque invented by the devil.

DETSCHOFF

What else would you have? This is

the only way we dare show ourselves on the streets. (*Again he motions for silence. The noise in the street flares up again. Two shots are heard. The women start and shudder.*)

DETSCHOFF

(*In a whisper.*) One doesn't get used to that.

MUSHIK

(*Opening the door.*) Hurry, please. (*He admits two more men and stays in the room himself, listening with his ear to the door. All watch him with uneasy anticipation. Presently he turns to them, nods reassuringly, goes to the door down right and calls*) Nastasha, Jan, you can begin now.

(*A lackey in smart livery and a uniformed maid enter. They rapidly unroll and spread a beautiful rug which has been standing in a corner. They tear the sheets of paper from the wall, revealing a magnificent wall-paper beneath. They turn the pictures face outwards, disclosing portraits of the Czar and sundry old aristocrats. They remove the coverings from the chandelier and from the furniture. Lights are turned on, and one sees a room exquisitely furnished and decorated.*)

(*In the meantime the guests have taken off their wraps. Ladies and gentlemen are in formal evening dress. The six of them are, to be precise, Countess Ribonpierre, twenty-five and very pretty; Countess Arnfeld, a slender brunette of twenty; Count Uchtomski, about forty, formerly an officer of the Imperial Guard; Prince Detschoff, about the same age; Count Kovaloff, twenty-five; and Baron Smirnov, past sixty.*)

UCHTOMSKI

(*Enthusiastically.*) This is really splendid! All dear old friends! I kiss your hand, Countess Ribonpierre. How charming you look, Countess Arnfeld. And you, my dear Kovaloff. And look, it's Baron Smirnov himself!

SMIRNOV

(*He has a bald head and a long white*

beard. In former days he was a banker who had succeeded in climbing up into the most exalted social circles.) Yes, I am here, too.

UCHTOMSKI

It's like a dream! Like a dream of the good old days! Why, it's as if we were at a soiree in the year 1910.

SMIRNOV

(*Shakes his head sadly.*) Does it really seem the same to you?

DETSCHOFF

(*To the others.*) I was so glad to run across Uchtomski. I promised him a sensation.

UCHTOMSKI

And you've kept your promise. Whose beautiful idea was this?

DETSCHOFF

The princess, of course. Who else could have thought of it?

MUSHIK

(*Enters at right; announces*) Princess Rubatin. (*The Princess Rubatin enters.*)

UCHTOMSKI

(*Advances to meet her; kisses her hand.*) My dear princess, I am grateful to you, grateful. A reunion like this is really too touching for words.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Welcome, Uchtomski. You look exceedingly well. Our reunion surprises you? Well, I don't wonder. (*Greets Countess Arnfeld.*) How are you, my dear? (*Turns to Uchtomski again.*) Aren't you curious to know how our reunions came about? (*Greets Detschoff and turns to Uchtomski again.*) It was my own idea. It seemed to me that however topsy-turvy the world outside may be and however dismal our own fate. . . . (*She welcomes the others during this speech*) there is no good reason why we shouldn't meet somewhere, now and then. One can learn, you know, to do without almost anything—even without food and—for-

give me for mentioning it—clean underclothes. But society, my dear, the society of your own sort, contact with the people who think and feel as you do—that is something one can't very well do without.

COUNTRESS RIBONPIERRE

Quite impossible!

COUNTRESS ARNFELD

I couldn't *live* without it.

SMIRNOV

And think of me! I had scarcely entered good society when good society ceased to exist. And now I'm back just where I started. There's luck for you!

DETSCHOFF

(*Smilingly addressing Smirnov.*) It does seem a pity to have labored so long and hard in vain.

SMIRNOV

Yes, if one could but have known in advance! But how could I guess that a time would come when it were better to be a beggar than a baron?

UCHTOMSKI

You started to tell me, princess, how these meetings began.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

I simply suggested that we meet here in my house. This room, the first from the hall, is ordinarily arranged to look like an old junk room. Anyone who wants to see it may come and look. We—that is little Nadja and I—we keep to the rear rooms. I suppose I shouldn't say "we" since I am . . . er occupied during the day, and the poor child is nearly always alone. . . . And so our little circle has come to meet here about one evening a week . . . for a little chat, a little music, a glass of tea and perhaps. . . . Mon Dieu, why not, if they find it amusing . . . perhaps a little flirtation. (*To Countess Ribonpierre.*) Isn't it so, dear? . . . : (*To Uchtomski again.*) All we needed was one decent costume apiece. And

I was sure that, though everything else may have vanished in the chaos, every man must have clung to a dinner suit and every woman to one decent gown.

SMIRNOV

Chaos! That describes it. And I had to be mixed up in it.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

(*Banteringly.*) And why should you have been spared? Since you were one of us in the good times, my dear Smirnov, it is your duty to stick to us in these bad times.

SMIRNOV

Duty! That's good! As if I had any choice. I'm forced to stick to you. The others won't have me now.

DETSCHOFF

Have you tried the others?

SMIRNOV

Certainly I've tried.

UCHTOMSKI

And they gave you the cold shoulder?

SMIRNOV

Cold shoulder nothing! They threw me out. (*Tragically.*) Just my luck to be branded an aristocrat in such times as these.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Never mind, my good Smirnov, at least *we* shall not desert you. (*To Uchtomski, continuing.*) And so, you see, our circle is together again. It's a great comfort, of course, but we are really not doing it for our own gratification alone. There's little Nadja to consider, too. Poor, dear, little thing, she has flown to me for refuge. . . . She is such a darling. . . . Her parents had planned to bring her out only this winter. And now . . . well . . . I thought these meetings would be some compensation for her. . . . I suppose you've heard what happened to the general, her father? Shot by his own soldiers at the front.

UCHTOMSKI

Does she know?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

No, no! And in Heaven's name, don't tell her. Let us spare her this sorrow as long as we can. (*To the maid, who is just entering.*) What is detaining the Countess Nadja?

MAID

She is dressing, your highness.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Yes, you see, we have sheltered her as much as possible from the cruelty of these times. She has still her beautiful clothes. Her life is altered as little as possible. She knows scarcely anything of the dreadful change that has taken place in Russia. She never leaves the house.

UCHTOMSKI

What does she do here all day long?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

She reads Dickens and Walter Scott, plays the piano and studies singing. Often the poor darling sings for us with her sweet little voice, just as in former days.

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

(*Her handkerchief to her eyes.*) Yes, as in former days.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

What's the matter, countess?

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

Ah, ma chere, sometimes I think I can't bear it a moment longer . . . my nerves . . . my nerves!

PRINCESS RUBATIN

You must forget your nerves, my dear. We used to have nerves and suffer anguish when a maid didn't button our shoes deftly enough, or when a man was five minutes late at a rendezvous. But since then we have discovered that either we have no nerves at all or that our nerves can bear anything.

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

(*Whimpering.*) When I think of the days that used to be!

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Were they so perfect then? You were bored all the time. At least you always complained of ennui. At the opera you could always be seen sitting as close as possible to the Royal Box, wearing pearls round your neck and in your eyes the expression of a martyr. What do you do now?

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

(*Low.*) I'm cashier in a coffee-house.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

That sounds most attractive. Do you take in the roubles, pour the tea, arrange the rum bottles on the bouffet, stack the lumps of sugar in those shiny nickel bowls?

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

Yes.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

What coffee-house?

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

At the Neva Bridge.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

That's a very busy place, isn't it? A pretty young cashier is not apt to lack admirers there. And you never were exactly indifferent to admiration, were you? When all is said, I fancy you find it more amusing there than ever you did in your palace.

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

Well, . . . it is amusing . . . in a way. (*Wistfully.*) But the romance, the distinction, is lacking.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

That's exactly what you used to say, my dear, at those magnificent balls you gave at your palace, with foreign noblemen dancing attendance in their gold-embroidered uniforms. Life was never romantic or distinctive enough for you unless some attractive male succeeded

in arousing your interest. But I should think you'd be able to find that sort of thing equally well behind the plate glass windows of your café on the Neva. You're much too experienced not to know that a man is a man whether his heroic breast be covered by the frock coat of a diplomat or the blouse of a sailor.

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

(*Joining in her laughter.*) Oh, I suppose I oughtn't complain when I think of how hard poor Countess Arnfeld has it.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

What about Countess Arnfeld?

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

She's become a washerwoman.

COUNTESS ARNFELD

You needn't pity me. (*To the others.*) She never has missed a chance to patronize me. For my part, I'd a thousand times rather earn my living respectably . . . yes, I prefer washing and ironing to flirting with common sailors in a coffee-house.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Ladies! Please!

COUNTESS ARNFELD

She started it.

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

I told only the truth.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

What does it matter what we do? I sell laces. (*To COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE*) You sit in a cashier's cage. (*To COUNTESS ARNFELD*) You wash and iron. Detschoff is a groom. Uchtomski, I hear, is assistant to a watchmaker. And Smirnov—what do you do anyhow, Smirnov?

BARON SMIRNOV

I sell newspapers. (*Shouts in the professional manner.*) Daily Post! Truth! Great sensation! Clemenceau shot! (*Very quietly.*) Every day I

cry out the news that someone else has been shot. People like to hear that.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

A most interesting vocation. But didn't I hear that you deal in old clothes as well? You needn't be ashamed of that. And Count Kovaloff needn't make such a secret of what he does for a living.

DETSCHOFF

He was always discreet.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Such discretion is superfluous now. We are living in a time when nothing is shameful except dishonesty. Poverty is almost an honor.

KOVALOFF

(*Greatly embarrassed.*) I conduct—er—what you might call—er—an establishment.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

An establishment of your own?

KOVALOFF

Yes—so to speak—er—a business.

DETSCHOFF

Are you conducting a gambling house?

KOVALOFF

No. I have. . . . My place is . . . er . . . at the crossing of two streets.

UCHTOMSKI

At a street corner?

KOVALOFF

Yes—at a street corner.

SMIRNOV

You mean a kiosk?

KOVALOFF

(*Still embarrassed.*) No—it's on the sidewalk . . . just a sort of booth—and I stand there—with my tools. . . . Not tools exactly. . . . Brushes—two of them. . . . And when someone passes . . . with dirty boots . . . well, . . . for half a rouble. . . .

PRINCESS RUBATIN

You are a bootblack. Why didn't you come out with it in the first place?

UCHTOMSKI

(*With a laugh.*) Congratulations.

KOVALOFF

It isn't as easy as you suppose. It takes quite some practice to become proficient.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

As in every art.

KOVALOFF

(*Earnestly.*) Well, there's quite an art in the proper handling of the brushes. . . .

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Doesn't one spit on the brushes?

KOVALOFF

Indeed, and that's where the difficulty comes in. In former days one had one's cigar—and so. . . .

PRINCESS RUBATIN

I should think the true artist would chew tobacco, then.

KOVALOFF

I must try that.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Good for you, Kovaloff. I'm sure you'll be a success at your new vocation. (*The others laugh.*) Don't laugh. I confess I like Kovaloff better as bootblack than I used to like him in the old days when his only talent was staging wild orgies and his chief amusement giving his horses champagne to drink. Now, at least, he lives decently.

KOVALOFF

Thank you, princess.

(*The princess rings for tea. The maid and lackey serve it and exit.*)

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Didn't some German philosopher say, "The world is as I conceive it"? Perhaps nothing has really changed out

there, but only we are altered. Anyway, let's pretend that nothing has changed and that all that happened to us was only a bad dream. Now we resume our life where we left it off. I am giving a soiree today. In a little while Nadja will sing for us. Meantime, Uchtomski, who knows the repertoire of every cabaret, will favor us with a song that's not too risqué.

UCHTOMSKI

With pleasure. (*Sits at the piano and plays the introduction to a song. But as he begins to play the noise in the street is heard again. It grows increasingly louder. Then heavy footsteps are heard mounting the stairs. Close by in the hallway, voices are heard.*)

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

For God's sake!

SMIRNOV

Our coats! Quick!

DETSCHOFF

Turn out the lights!

SMIRNOV

Hide, hide!

A RED GUARD

(*His voice rings gruff and sharp just outside the door.*) Open! Open, do you hear? (*His bayonet splinters a panel of the door and his heavy heel kicks it open. He enters out of the darkness of the hallway, carrying his rifle at ready.*) Oh, here you are! (*Turns his head to address an invisible comrade in the hall.*) Hey, there, Toberchik, where are you going? Here are the rats. (*The sound of footsteps climbing higher up the stairs can be heard. With a shrug the Red Guard turns to the occupants of the room again.*) Oh, well, I can handle them alone. (*He closes the door and stands with his back to it, confronting them aggressively.*)

(*The men step in front of the ladies, as if to defend them.*)

(*PRINCESS RUBATIN steps proudly out from behind the line of men.*)

PRINCESS RUBATIN

We are a lawful gathering.

RED GUARD

Who are you?

PRINCESS RUBATIN .

I am the Princess Rubatin.

RED GUARD

Aristocrats, eh?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

We are defenseless. You may carry off what you will. We have nothing more to lose.

RED GUARD

(*Angrily.*) What do you take me for? A thief? I don't want your gaudy rags and trinkets.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

What *do* you want of us, then?

RED GUARD

I want to know what you are all doing here. What have you assembled for? For what purpose? To restore the old order? To renew the war? To recall the Czar?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

We are a lawful assembly.

RED GUARD

And I arrest this assembly. I march you all down into the street and turn you over to the people. You needn't explain to me. It's no concern of mine. Speak to the people. Explain to them. Maybe they'll believe you. But I doubt it. Maybe they'll be fools enough to believe that this company of princes and counts—that is what you are, isn't it?—has not met here to conspire against the republic. (*Touches his rifle significantly.*) Shall I tell you what they'll answer?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

We are in your power. Do with us as you will.

COUNTESS RIBONPIERRE

(*Moving closer to him.*) As you will.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

But I repeat: we are not here to conspire against the republic.

RED GUARD

What then are you here for?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Just a social gathering. Mere innocent amusement.

RED GUARD

Hadn't you amusement enough while we were lying out there like rats in the mud and blood and snow of the trenches? We were more wretched than the vermin on our bodies while you were amusing yourselves here. We ate grass and you covered your bodies with silks. Men were shattered and maimed. Trembling, blinded, with frozen feet and sawed-off hands they were driven against the barbed wire entanglements, and if they didn't go quickly enough they were shot down from behind. And all the time you were amusing yourselves. Well, it's your turn now. Pay up!

PRINCESS RUBATIN

(*Very low.*) We have paid already. And yet, we were not the guilty ones. You may believe that.

RED GUARD

Who were guilty then? We? The peasants, the workmen? The victims?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

We were victims, too.

RED GUARD

(*Scornfully.*) You! What have you lost?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Nothing you would prize. Only the things we considered life insupportable without. Perhaps they were nothing compared with what others sacrificed, but, after all, we are human, and it is only human to try to live as well as you can. Hasn't everyone that right?

RED GUARD

Everyone who works.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

I sell laces. The Countess Ribon-pierre is cashier in a coffee-house. Countess Arnfeld washes and irons. Count Detschoff is a groom. Prince Uchtomski is learning a trade. Smirnov sells newspapers and Count Kovaloff black boots.

KOVALOFF

(*With a professional glance at the RED GUARD's boots, shakes his head disapprovingly before he speaks.*) Yes, everyone here works.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

(*To the RED GUARD.*) But if you believe we should suffer still more, lead the way; we will follow.

RED GUARD

Who else lives in this apartment?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

(*Alarmed; too emphatically.*) No one else.

RED GUARD

Whom are you hiding?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

I told you. No one.

RED GUARD

(*Moves toward the door at right.*) I'll see for myself.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

(*Catches at his arm, pleadingly.*) Please! There is someone else. A young girl. She knows nothing of what's going on. We have guarded her carefully, sheltered her. It's for her sake we meet here like this—to keep her from missing the old life too much. Do as you will with us, but I implore you, spare the poor little girl.

RED GUARD

Who is she?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Her name is Nadja. She is the daughter of General Feodor Feodorowicz.

RED GUARD

(*Thundering.*) Ah, the daughter of Feodorowicz! And do you know what he was, this fine general? The bloodiest butcher of them all. Do you know how many men he sent to the slaughter?

PRINCESS RUBATIN

He is dead himself now.

RED GUARD

Yes, shot down like the dog he was. He deserved it. All the generals with their golden stars deserved it. The cold-blooded butchers! Parasites! Instigators of war! . . .

PRINCESS RUBATIN

I know how you feel. And perhaps you are right. Perhaps it is only just that we should suffer now more than the others. I don't ask mercy for us. But this little girl has never harmed anyone in the world. She is gentle as a dove. She adored her father, and he is dead. We have not told her. We have not dared. The shock might. . . . (*She stops suddenly, for the door at right has opened and NADJA enters.*)

NADJA

(*Comes gaily into the room, stops short when she sees the silent, solemn faces.*) I'm sorry to be late. . . . My dress. . . . Are you angry with me? Is anything wrong? (*Her glance roves questioningly from face to face until at last she sees the soldier.*) A soldier! (*Her hand goes quickly to her heart.*) He has a message for me. A message from my father. How is he? Why hasn't he written to me in all these months? (*The RED GUARD is silent.*) Is it bad news? I beg you, tell me.

RED GUARD

(*Hesitates, then averts his face.*) I know nothing of him.

PRINCESS RUBATIN

(*Sighs with relief, addresses NADJA brightly.*) We shall have to disappoint you, dear. We are not staying this evening. We shall have to go away—all of us.

NADJA

Oh, please don't go. I'll be so disappointed if you do. All week long I wait and prepare for this hour. I am so happy when I think of it! And if you leave me now, after I've waited so long. . . . Oh, I've practiced a new song. Couldn't you stay just until I've sung it for you. It won't take long. Please, please? *(To the RED GUARD.)* Can't you make them stay? And perhaps you'd like to hear the song, too? *(They all look at the guard for consent. He bows his head in acquiescence.)*

PRINCESS RUBATIN

Well, sing it, my child. We can stay that long.

(NADJA goes to the piano, seats herself and sings a sad little Russian song. All listen sadly. The RED GUARD, standing by the door, is deep in thought. Just as the song ends, heavy footsteps are heard in the hall again.)

A VOICE

(Calling gruffly from the hall.) Vladimir!

RED GUARD

(Looks up quickly, whispers.) Out with the lights.

(The lights are switched off. The room is in utter darkness. The RED GUARD opens the door.)

THE VOICE

(Outside.) Hey, Vladimir, what are you doing in there. Anything there?

RED GUARD

(In the doorway. The reddish glow of a lantern outside frames his figure in silhouette as he speaks.) Not a thing. I've searched the whole place. Nobody here.

(He steps into the hall, closing the door behind him. The voices and footsteps of the soldiers in the hall recede and die out. In the dark room there is the stillness of death, as quickly.)

THE CURTAIN FALLS



To Any Friend of Mine

By Helen Underwood Hoyt

WE have been merry in our little friendship,
 Climbed daisied hills and laughed into the sky,
 Talked of far beauty, read romance and wisdom,
 Compared our fancies, often wondered why
 Old days grow lovely bannered with our dreaming,
 Or how it is that things are beautiful;
 We have sung ballads of the armored ages
 Many an evening while the sky grew cool.
 Oh, we have danced, and dreamed and played together,
 And yet I wonder, is this the real you?
 I am so lonely under our gay friendship,
 Friend of mine, tell me, are you lonely, too?



The Lascivious Bird

By Roger Wray

I

WHEN Cartwright first told me about the bird that plagued Andrew Parsons, I treated the story as a piece of playfulness on his part. I had never met Andrew Parsons, but I had heard a good deal about him from Cartwright, and I gathered that he was a somewhat eccentric old bachelor who lived in a state of extreme rusticity and ran a poultry farm for amusement. Cartwright, I might explain, was really a city business man; but as he was suffering from a delusion that market gardening was the only post-war occupation which promised to escape financial disaster, he went to live in the country. Parsons and he were practically next-door neighbours.

There is no doubt about the fact (which Cartwright consistently denied) that he found the village life too monotonous, and when it became intolerable—which happened every month—he was in the habit of coming up to town for a day or two. He used to lunch with me, gossip about rates of exchange, and occasionally about his experiments on the land. I distinctly remember the first time he mentioned Andrew Parsons, and it was evident from his general attitude toward the man that he considered him more than a trifle mad.

"What would you think," he demanded, "if you heard a fellow spouting poetry to himself the other side of the hedge? Yards and yards of it! Miles of it! But he's a clever chap in some ways—clever but queer. He has a tremendous enthusiasm for

birds, knows every one of them—life-history, personal quarrels, everything! Let him hear a chirrup or a squeak, and he'll tell you the Latin name of the bird that made it. He's amazing. He gets so excited, too. In early spring, it was too funny!"

"What sort of poetry does he recite?" I asked.

"All sorts—Keats' Nightingale, Shelley's Skylark, Wordsworth's Cuckoo, Tennyson's Thristle, and heaps of stuff I've never heard before. It's all about birds, you notice. I think he must have a collection of all the poems about birds that have ever been written. The first time I caught him at it, there was a thrush singing on a pear-tree in my garden, and old Parsons was declaiming till the tears ran down his cheeks:

*"Summer is coming, summer is coming,
I know it, I know it, I know it;
Light again, life again, leaf again, love
again,*

Yes, my wild little poet . . ."

"I know," I answered. "The poem imitates the bird's song."

"That is so. In the case of the thrush, it is fairly obvious. But Andrew Parsons tells me he understands all bird-language. He says a thrush has scores of different melodies in his repertory, and changes them to suit his mood. They are chiefly love-songs, though."

"Well, naturally. . . ."

"Did you ever listen to starlings? They are awful chatterboxes. There are hundreds of them round us, and they hold committee-meetings on my walnut-tree. They quarrel like mad,

apparently, and slander one another for all they are worth. I can't make head or tail of what they are saying, but Parsons can—or thinks he can. He tells me they swear frightfully at times. Starlings are the most blasphemous birds under the sun!"

"It does certainly sound uncommonly like swearing," I observed.

"Yes. Not fit for a decent man to hear, Parsons says. He's rather hurt about it. But there are compensations. He goes into ecstasies over skylarks, robins, blackcaps, bullfinches, blackbirds, reed-warblers, and so on. He understands what the little beggars are singing to their mates. But his own hens, he tells me, are always nagging. Mrs. Caudle wasn't in it compared to an average barnyard hen. Nag, nag, nag! Morning, noon, and night! But she shuts up when her lord and master comes strutting along. He won't stand domestic squabbles in his presence. Parsons says some queer things. He told me the other day that cockerels are Mohametans, fierce and proud as Arab chiefs. They have a dozen wives apiece, a regular harem, after the Oriental custom. And they wear the red fez, like an old Turk! Rum idea, isn't it? He's got a peculiar imagination, and an odd brand of originality which is entirely his own make. Ah, well, he helps to make life more interesting. The local farmers regard him as completely cracked. I dare say they are not far wrong."

After that first description of Andrew Parsons, I invariably made inquiries concerning the gentleman. There was generally something laughable to relate about him. Cartwright was mildly amused by his whimsicalities, and I looked upon him as a legitimate subject for jokes.

It was in the beginning of June when Cartwright told me about the particular bird that was annoying Parsons so intensely. Parsons did not know what species of bird it was, and the circumstance was in itself

suspicious. It used to live in the wood at the bottom of the orchard, but during the day it kept silent. Soon after sunset it used to begin singing, and "kept it up" half the night. Cartwright had not heard it himself when he first told me about it. The whole story was derived from Parsons's information.

"It's a wicked old scamp," Parsons used to say. "A very wicked old scamp indeed. It's a bird of Satan, if ever there was one."

"How do you mean?" Cartwright asked in curiosity.

"It isn't only what he says; it's the sly, suggestive way he says it. That bird has an evil mind. He's worse than a satyr. It's his mating-song, of course, but he isn't satisfied with sentiment (as other birds are); he's devilish, lustful, passionate. It's maddening to listen to him. It gets into your blood. He'll drive me clean crazy one of these nights. I have been out with my gun three or four times, but I can't catch a glimpse of him."

Cartwright told me all this with a mischievous smile in the corner of his mouth, and I treated the matter as a piece of frivolity on his part. Either he was joking with me, or else Parsons was becoming a lunatic.

I dismissed the subject lightly enough, but it recurred to my mind over and over again. I wondered whether the modern psychoanalysts could explain it all away. Was it possible that the whole thing was a delusion of Parsons's brain? Had he created the bird out of his own feverish fancy? Was it a case of hallucination—a symptom of deepening monomania? I had a vague idea that some suppressed instinct in the man might find outlet in this extraordinary manner.

II

A MONTH later Cartwright returned to town, and I immediately made inquiries about the bird that tormented poor old Parsons.

"You surely don't believe in that Satanic bird?" he exclaimed.

"You were joking then? I thought as much!"

"But you are wrong. I was not joking at all. Parsons told me every word I told you."

"Then do you think there is no bird at all?"

"I thought he was romancing," Cartwright said. "I fancied it was just another cracked notion he'd conceived in some queer corner of his head."

"But you have changed your opinion since?"

"The bird is real enough—and wicked enough, too, by Jove!"

"Then you have actually heard it?"

"Three times; and I tell you that bird is the very devil."

"Tell me all about it," I urged.

"Well, I can't pretend to understand every word the bird says, as Parsons does, but I can feel what he means. It's the most seductive and sensual music one has ever heard. I know the Kreutzer Sonata is supposed to be passionate; I've heard 'Samson and Delilah,' which is luxurious enough; I can imagine the voluptuous music of the Sirens when they lured sailors ashore; but honestly, I have never heard nor imagined anything like that bird's singing. It's a good thing I'm a decent, steady, self-controlled man. It would never do for the young folks to hear it. . . .

"Other birds sing their love-lyrics, but they are innocent as drawing-room songs. Not so this scoundrel's! None of your Annie Lauries and Kathleen Mavourneens for him! If Belial were his father, and Venus his mother. . . .

"Of course, the birds have the same mating instincts that we have. They feel the same cravings for their own flesh and blood. These summer nights the bird haunts one. He begins innocently enough. He sings about the magic of the cool night, the drifting perfumes, the intoxicating odours.

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Then he grows dreamy, languid, sensual; he weaves a spell; he croons and swoons in a sort of ecstasy. As music alone, it is lovely to hear him; but it's the devil to one's senses! I have had to close my bedroom window to try to shut him out, but you can't do it. His voice isn't loud, but it seems to penetrate—there's no getting away from him. As Andrew Parsons says, what is the good of having a censorship for plays and keeping a strict watch on new novels, when we allow a seductive bird to demoralize half the countryside! You see what he means? When vice is known as vice, there is little to fear; but the effect of this bird's singing is dangerous. It's alluring, and 'heady' like wine. It stirs amorous passions; it conjures up the most delicious yearnings and day dreams; it awakes impulses of sweet desire and fans them into frenzy. . . ."

Cartwright stopped suddenly and looked rather shamefaced. He had been carried away by his emotions, and found himself growing oratorical. An Englishman detests being carried away as he detests flowery speech, and my companion relapsed into a painful silence. I did not press the matter further that day, although there were a number of questions I wanted to ask.

III

NEXT time Cartwright came to lunch he talked about every subject except Andrew Parsons. He probably guessed that I was burning with curiosity to know more about the bird, and for some reason or other he deliberately diverted the conversation in other directions. We were actually getting up from table and on the point of separating for another month when I forced him to speak.

"How's old Andrew Parsons getting along?" I asked.

"Just the same as ever."

"Heard any more of the bird lately?"

"It's gone away," he said, but I could see from his manner that he had not told the whole truth.

"What happened to it?" I persisted.

"Parsons and I drove it away, but it hasn't gone far. It appears to be in a wood about a couple of miles off."

"Well?"

"Look here, you are laughing about this business!"

I denied it solemnly.

"If you are really serious," Cartwright said, "I'll tell you the oddest thing you ever heard. You need not believe it, of course; but then, you haven't heard the bird! The creature has settled in a wood close to Captain Jigson's place. Captain Jigson is a

man of more than fifty, and until recently his character was irreproachable. You've heard the name, of course?"

"Captain Jigson? It does sound familiar, although I don't for the moment recollect where I've heard it."

"No? It's in all the papers. The Sunday papers have made a lot of it, naturally."

"But what has he done?"

"Don't ask. The affair is notorious. He is cited as the co-respondent in a Society divorce case. There's no need to go into the details."

"And you think . . . that bird . . . ?"

"I haven't the least shadow of doubt," said Cartwright.



Life's Deciding Trifles

By John Torcross

HE had called her on the telephone and was on the point of apologizing for everything, when they were cut in upon.

"Oh hell," he muttered, and went downtown.

It was their last conversation.



APPLAUSE is very pleasing to a popular author. He pricks up his ears and stretches them out farther and farther to catch the faintest echo—until finally he becomes the perfect ass.



Hilda Bingham

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

WHEN Clyde left, Hilda Bingham threw herself on the couch and cried. The powder disappeared from her nose. Her handkerchief was stained with mascara from the make-up on her eyes. She didn't care. Nothing mattered.

So—she had given up Clyde after all. Given him up? It was Clyde who had given her up, thrown her over. Of course.

Still, how could she have held Clyde, anyhow? Wasn't she married—a married woman? And older than Clyde. Five years older. It was a wonder he had cared for her at all, ever. He had cared. She knew that. Not a great deal, of course. But then Clyde wasn't capable of caring a great deal for anyone. But he had cared a little. Enough to accept favors and come to see her and take her places, occasionally. More than that.

Now Clyde was in love with someone else. She knew the girl: a little round-faced blonde, with silly, puffy hair and a way of asking questions. Her name was Margie Clemens. Hilda hated the name "Margie." So coyly affected. It just suited the girl. Margie asked questions, because she knew it was the only way she could talk to men. Margie knew it sounded as if you were interested in men if you asked questions, and it kept her from thinking of anything to say.

Hilda could see through Margie's tricks. But Hilda knew something else, too. She knew that if Clyde really loved Margie he would like her tricks whether he saw through them or not,

that it wouldn't help a bit to point them out to him, even though he would hate exactly those same tricks in anyone else.

Hilda knew that was the big thing about liking people, that is, loving them, rather. If you love someone, everything about them is all right. You love faults as much as virtues. If you don't love a man he might as well be wooden. His virtues are as uninteresting as his vices. Everything he says is of no consequence at all. There was Fred.

There wasn't a better man than Fred Bingham any place. Hilda knew that. She was proud of her husband, proud of his success, his appearance. There was never a time since she had known Fred that he had ever done one single thing that wasn't the right thing to do. At banquets he made the best speeches; as a host he was excellent. He knew just how to order dinners, take care of servants, things like that. And yet, even while Hilda knew that she had been lucky in marrying Fred, that she was lucky to have him, now, it was Clyde she cared about.

Clyde wasn't like Fred. There was nothing successful about Clyde. His coats were always smelling of tobacco. His hair always needed brushing. Clyde never had any money. In restaurants he was ill at ease. In homes he was awkward, always doing the wrong things, knocking things over. Clyde was always making errors, the sort of errors that made you want to put your arms around him and—well, protect him, almost.

Now Clyde was in love with Margie Clemens, was going to marry her, probably. He had said that. That didn't mean a great deal, of course. Clyde had

had half a dozen previous love affairs. He was always afraid he was being forced into matrimony. There was nothing solid or dependable about Clyde. But this time he was serious. The Clemenses had money. Margie wasn't too popular. Most men, in fact, knew how stupid she was; made fun of her almost half-witted stare, her silly questions.

The Clemenses would be glad enough to encourage Clyde. Clyde actually liked her stupidity, even while he didn't know how stupid she really was. Clyde had said: "I like her not knowing things. I can teach her." Clyde didn't know that the things he thought he could teach Margie were the things she could never learn. There was just something lacking in her. Clyde would find that out soon enough. There was nothing to do about it. If he was unhappy, he'd make the best of it. If you're in love with a girl, nothing anyone can say will change things. And, if you're not in love, there's no use anyone saying anything.

Clyde might be marrying for money, even. There was quite a calculating streak in him. Hilda knew he had always taken any of the little favors she offered him. She knew that one reason Clyde liked her—had liked her—was because of the things she had done for him.

What would she do now without Clyde? Why, her whole life had been Clyde, had depended on Clyde. Her mornings had been spent waiting for Clyde to telephone her. She would force herself to get up and dress so she could have breakfast with Fred. It was so much the thing to do. Fred really appreciated it. Then she would spend hours doing nothing.

Her real duties, giving orders to the housekeeper, overlooking things a bit, took less than half an hour. Then she would take as long as possible over her bath. She would read and write letters until she hated the books and the paper. Anything to pass time. Even then it would be only about eleven. She knew Clyde would not be awake, couldn't

possibly telephone her earlier than that. Clyde stayed up most of the night and slept all of the morning.

Whenever the telephone would ring, Hilda would wait, tremblingly, while the maid answered it, sometimes answering it herself in her eagerness. Usually, it was a woman friend, and they would gossip, even while Hilda was thinking of Clyde, wondering what he was doing. Occasionally, it would be Clyde who telephoned. She would become unreasonably excited, almost dizzy, when she heard his pleasant, though unremarkable, voice. Sometimes he would ask her to go to tea with him. Sometimes he would want to break an engagement he had made a few days before. Either way, Hilda was careful not to annoy him nor put him in a bad humor. After she talked with him she would be in a pleasant glow for an hour.

If Clyde did not telephone, Hilda could manage to pass the time until twelve or one o'clock. She could never force herself to wait longer than that. If the telephone operator in Clyde's apartment building said, "Mr. Grant does not answer" or "Mr. Grant just went out," Hilda would be miserable. She would try to get him at the one club he frequented. Failing that, she would spend half the day trying to locate him, excusing herself when at teas or luncheons to rush at intervals to the telephone.

Clyde was an artist. His "rooms," which was the way he always referred to his combined studio and living quarters, were a fair-sized studio with a good north light, a tiny bedroom and bath and an inadequate kitchenette. Hilda had been happiest the days Clyde had allowed her to visit his rooms and prepare tea for him, doing the same menial tasks she would have thought unbearable had Fred asked her to perform them at home.

Hilda had always told Clyde where she would spend her days, so that he might reach her, if he wanted to. Sometimes, to her intense delight, he would telephone her at her club or at a party.

Often Hilda had met Clyde for luncheon or tea. Frequently she paid the bills, and paid them gladly. It was worth far more to be with Clyde than the tiny amounts these things cost her. She was always happy when she was with him, though she was happiest in his rooms. Then she could run her hands through his brown, always mussed, hair. Sometimes, even, he would put his arms around her, kiss her. Those were moments to be remembered.

Even Hilda's evenings had been filled with Clyde. She would think about him, no matter what she did. But when Fred was away, which was not infrequently, she could sometimes persuade Clyde to accompany her to the theatre or the opera. All of her women friends knew she cared for Clyde were bored by her stories of him, in fact. It wasn't a matter of concealment, of Fred finding out. It was a matter of trying to keep Clyde out of every conversation.

Everything that happened brought Clyde to her mind, if he could ever be said to be out of her mind—the way one man walked, the voice of another, something she read in a book, something someone said in a shop. Clyde . . . Clyde . . . Clyde. . . .

II

Now she must give up Clyde. What would she do? What would she do with her days? She couldn't see him nor telephone to him. That was certain.

She had known for a long time now that this was coming. She had tried giving up Clyde before, but each time she had gone back. There was no more going back. She knew that. Clyde had made that plain. He could be ugly, really ugly, if he wanted to be. She had seen him that way with others. He wanted definitely to be rid of her now. Clyde was through. For her own pride, her own respect, she had to stay away from him.

It would be awfully hard. What else was there to think about, talk about? Well, it had to be done.

Hilda dried her eyes. Fred would be home in half an hour.

She went to her room, made up her face, put on a fresh frock. After all, she wasn't a bad-looking woman for— for thirty-five. Not at all bad-looking. Margie Clemens said she was twenty-four—she was twenty-five, more than likely. Ten years—ten years of youth—

Not that Margie Clemens had so many things. But five years younger than Clyde had a thousand advantages over being five years older. Clyde was thirty. But that didn't matter. Clyde cared for Margie. That's what did matter.

Hilda knew that if Clyde had asked her to go away with him, she would have left Fred and the comforts that being Fred's wife meant, and go. But he hadn't asked her. Clyde hated trouble, responsibility. If he had asked her he would have grown tired of her. After Clyde, then, there would have been nothing but unpleasant vistas of— of going down. Even that—two years—one year with Clyde. . . .

It was too late even to think of that. She'd have to get over thinking of Clyde at all.

When Fred came home to dinner, Hilda greeted him with the bright artificial smile she always used. After dinner they went to the theatre with the Hilliers. What a tiresome evening! Like all of her evenings would be. What was Clyde doing? Was he with Margie—kissing Margie?

Hilda could hardly get to sleep that night for thinking of Clyde. She tossed in her pale green enameled bed and at four snapped on the electric light and read for half an hour and then lay awake for an hour more. At eight she was awake again. Eight—a long morning to live through. A morning? A lifetime . . . a lifetime without Clyde. How could she go through with it?

Her life, the past months anyhow, had been feverish, restless. She had been tossed by her emotions for Clyde. There had been hours of tears and of worry, bright moments of happiness. Must all that go? Even the tears, the unhappiness, were better than nothing at all.

All morning Hilda stayed away from the telephone. About noon it became a physical agony. She went to the telephone then and talked with half a dozen women she knew, making engagements for later in the week, for the week to follow. She had to do something. What if Clyde had been sorry, had tried to get her and found the telephone busy? Another hour of waiting. Clyde did not telephone.

In the afternoon she went to the matinee. A tiresome play. She hardly knew what it was about. Clyde . . . Clyde . . . Clyde and Margie. . . . That night she and Fred dined out. That was a little better.

Two days of fever, then, of wanting Clyde, of wondering about him. She kept away from the telephone. But she went where she thought he might be, passed his club, his apartment building, hoping to have an "accidental" meeting, to catch a glimpse of him. She did not see him.

Then Hilda was called out of town. An aunt in Connecticut wrote that she was ill.

Ordinarily, Hilda would have arranged for a nurse to be sent or ignored the illness altogether. She went herself now. The aunt was really ill and Hilda was useful. A week passed, ten days. Each day was full of thoughts of Clyde. She was as restless as when she had been seeing Clyde. Would it ever stop? Wouldn't she have peace, ever? Now, peace was what she wanted.

Back in town, Hilda plunged into a turmoil of doing things. She looked up all of the old friends she had forgotten during the past months. She hadn't needed people while she had Clyde. She went to teas with men who bored her. She listened to the affairs of women who interested her not at all. She had to do something. Clyde. . . .

What was Clyde doing? Each day she thought that he would telephone her, that he must telephone her. Rainy days she felt especially close to him. One day she felt as if he needed her, wanted her. She could hardly keep away from the telephone. She must

keep away! Clyde could see her if he wanted to. He knew where she was. What if Clyde did need her, even a little?

Was he engaged . . . married? Was he happy with Margie? Did he put his arms around her roughly and kiss Margie, his lips pressed firm against Margie's lips, the way he had kissed her? Hilda grew almost ill when she thought of it. Well, it was over. . . .

She did not see Clyde. She looked for him at the theatre, at his restaurants, on his favorite streets. Was it Fate that was keeping them apart? It looked quite that way.

She wondered when she would see him again. Would she ever see him? She hoped it wouldn't be accidentally, on a rainy day. Hilda didn't look well in the rain. Would he need her, some time, and send for her. Or, would they meet, formally, after many years and shake hands, and laugh lightly over their past? Would she be old-looking then, or looking well? What did it matter, after all. Clyde. . . .

Then, one day, perhaps three months after she had last seen him, Hilda woke up with a wonderful new feeling. It took her half an hour to realize what it was. Then it burst upon her suddenly—she didn't love Clyde any more! Clyde had gone away, completely, out of her mind. She could think of him and it didn't hurt. She wasn't in love with Clyde any more at all.

III

It seemed wonderful, complete, beautiful. Hilda had a feeling of almost liquid tranquillity, as if the world were going by on velvet-covered wheels. Things were all right. The world was all right. She was free—free from Clyde.

Not that there were any other men. There never would be—not as Clyde had been. That was certain. But suddenly Hilda knew that she was interested in other men, in the men she knew, in men who cared about taking

her to teas and dinner, in half a dozen men, clever, interesting—in Fred, even. She was interested in the women she knew, in their affairs.

Hilda thought of the engagements she had ahead. They stretched out pleasantly—a week-end with the Graham Clarks, tea with Stuart Morris, a party with the Robertsons—pleasant things. Life was good, after all. Clyde—oh, Clyde was wonderful, fine in a way, but Clyde was gone, a person in her past, back with the men she had cared about before she had married Fred. Of course. She had thought that could never happen.

Perhaps her emotions were shallow, after all. Three months, and she didn't love Clyde any more. And she would have gone away with him, given up everything. Now she had everything, pleasant things, friends, Fred. She didn't even miss Clyde. Peace. She never would have had peace with Clyde. Not even if he had been willing to go on with things the way they had been. No, this was better. This was the way, of course.

Life moved on smoothly. Not that Hilda did anything useful. She never did that, though Clyde had once suggested, before he stopped seeing her, that she do something worth while, outside of herself. She was satisfied, just the way things were—books, music, the theatre, friends.

She was able to pick up a book now and enjoy it without thinking of Clyde at all. Occasionally she would think of him, of course. But not frequently nor annoyingly. She was tranquilly satisfied—happy even—happier than she had thought she ever would be again. The mornings passed pleasantly with no nervous waiting for the ringing of a bell. The afternoons ran along into evenings with only the smallest bit of impatience. Things were quite all right. Years like this . . . why not. . .

Hilda went to a party at the Reddingtons. The Reddingtons were newly married and with no money. They had the oddest sort of an apartment in a made-over building in Eleventh Street.

A nice little couple, the Reddingtons. They'd pile a dozen people into their tiny place and serve coffee and rather bready sandwiches and play the Victrola and dance. It was rather fun. Mary Reddington had given up a rather luxurious home for the two-room apartment and she and Pat seemed quite happy about it, so far.

They were having a rather gay time, dancing in the studio room. It was getting late. Hilda thought all the guests had arrived. The doorbell rang. Hilda looked up, unconsciously. It was Clyde! She was dancing. She stopped, lost step, started again. She felt cold, weak. Clyde. He had come alone.

How well he looked! His brown hair was brushed rather smooth. He had on a new suit. Of course. It had been months—months. . . . How often she had visualized their meetings—mostly, years later, when they were old. They would talk things over, in a Leonard Merrick sort of way. Now she was not old. She knew she looked about the same. Clyde hadn't changed. Yes—he was rather thin—his cheeks were thin. Clyde. . . . She didn't care. Of course not. She'd tell Clyde how she had got over caring for him. They'd laugh about that. Of course.

Clyde. The room was whirling.

After the dance, Hilda tried to talk with other people, as she had been talking. It was only Clyde she saw, as it had been only Clyde she had seen months ago. Clyde. She waited half an hour. He was looking over a book with a thin girl who wore a purple blouse, an awful girl. She and Clyde laughed together. Hilda joined them. The girl went away a few minutes later.

"How are you?" asked Clyde, just as he would have asked if she had seen him after a day's separation.

"Quite well. And you? You remember the Hudsons. . . ." She was chatting to him, trying to be interesting, quite as she had chatted, tried to be interesting, months before.

She watched him closely.

She saw, with a catch in her throat, that Clyde was warming to her, unfolding.

Then he began telling her things about himself, little things, curiously funny things—yes, whimsical things—precious things—Clyde—

"Aren't you married, Clyde?" she ventured at last.

"Married? Me? Oh, you mean the Clemens kid. Good Lord, no! She just wanted matrimony, not me. Took Ted Brown, instead. Didn't you know? Uh, huh. It was just as well. A cute kid, though, if there ever was one. . . . Know Sally Van Dorn? I've been trailing around with her a bit. One of these Kewpie kids, you know. Nice girl. Nothing serious. I'm getting too old. I'm a waster, Hilda; yes, I am, honestly, wasting my life. . . ."

He was talking as he had always talked, about himself, saying little, intimate things—things that needed contradicting—when he wanted to be comforted.

Mary Reddington came to say something about more sandwiches.

"Of course I'll help make them," said Hilda. "You come, too, Clyde."

Clyde followed her, in his lazy way, into the tiny kitchen. He sat on a stool, talking to Hilda and Mary. He didn't offer to help. Mary took the sandwiches into the living-room. Someone came in for the coffee. Then they were alone.

Hilda went up to Clyde, put out her hand, timidly. She couldn't keep from it—she had to touch his hair—Clyde's hair. He had his arm around her, was kissing her, roughly.

"Hilda," he was saying, rather brokenly, "I knew I'd do this, when I first saw you in there—Hilda—"

"You do care?" she asked, tremulously.

"Care? I suppose I do. As much

as I can care. . . . Not a lot, of course—but, well, I rather like you, Hilda, you know that."

"You're not going to—to give me up—make me not see you—?" With one finger she traced a line on his cheek, outlined his lips. . . . Clyde's lips. . . .

"Not right away, anyhow. Don't be a goose, Hilda, or I'll have to. But—I am fond of you. Of course I'll see you, if you like—I'd rather like to, in fact. Yes—I believe I would. . . ."

He kissed her again, said "There," ever so slightly pushed her away. How dear he was, his hair, his lips, Clyde. . . .

"You'll telephone me tomorrow morning?" she asked, as they joined the others.

"Same telephone number? All right. I'll try to make it. If not, in a day or so. I'm rather busy, doing a job for Ketters. Listen, Hilda, would you like to go to an exhibition of etchings little Wanda Gates has on? Thursday? Nothing to rave over. You might care to see them, though, and you could come up to my rooms later for tea, if you liked. The little Gates. . . ."

Hilda listened ecstatically. Her world of peace and tranquillity melted away. She was back where she had been months before. Turmoil, unrest. . . . Life would go on, now, as it had gone on—tomorrow she would be waiting for Clyde's telephone call. He might telephone her! She could telephone him if he didn't. Clyde. . . . He didn't care for her deeply. Of course not. He'd drop her for the first pretty face. What of it? Days of unhappiness, of tears, of waiting, of loneliness stretched ahead. The peace of the past was broken. She would be worried again, nervous, unhappy. Clyde—Clyde—he had come back. . . . Clyde had come back. How wonderful life was. . . . !



The Higher Learning in America

III

Columbia University

By Sarah Addington

IT hardly looks like a factory at first sight, this group of brick and gray stone buildings separated by wide streets here, cramped cobblestones there, whose giant library is fronted by an extravagant sweep of steps, whose fountains shimmer in the sunlight, whose green spots are but the more vivid for their infrequency. Ah, but I forget, factories *are* that way now. That old familiar figure, the smoky, dirty-faced factory who had cobwebs in his eyebrows and smears all over his vest, has been reformed like any other bum, and now presents to a righteous public a front of clean bricks, fluted columns and polished window glass. It is right and proper, then, that this education mill at Broadway and 116th Street, New York, should belie its true character with an external impression of peace, with mannerisms of grace.

And how cunningly is this effect contrived! There is a certain air of mellow quiet here—"British," we call it who have never been to England. It is breathed off by the ivy, exhaled by the worn leather doors in the library, becomes almost authentic as Peter, the college feline, snoozing on the chapel steps, stirs a whisper in his sleep, and then sinks deep into dreams again, academic-wise. If you count them, there are only a few spruces and maples and poplars on the grounds, but so thriftily are these set out, with such exquisite economy,

that for a moment one almost fancies that here, too, is the classic shade, profound, cool, world-obliterating.

But alas, it is but a mask. Get closer to the place and sniff the smell of hard work. Try walking in the shade of one tree at a time and see how hot the pavement is, and how classic the shade isn't. Hear the boast: "The biggest University in the United States." Taste the metallic flavor of efficiency. This is Columbia.

It is strange that nobody else in this great result-getting land has had the wit to apply quantity production to a university and call it education, for it is such an eminently successful method. Oh, yes; there is the University of California, but there is the Chevrolet, too, and yet the Ford is still the generic flivver, and by the same rule Columbia remains the great factory of college graduates, f. o. b. New York. Nicholas Murray Butler may remember who Benedict Arnold was, and he does know that the Republican party is the hope of the world—items about which Mr. Ford has had his waverings and his doubts—but, beyond that, the two become as one: it is a negligible detail that one works with flesh and bone and gray matter, and the other with tinplate and pasteboard.

But since nobody else has had the wit to build an education factory, Columbia stands unique in her greatness. And Mr. Butler promises still

a bigger and hence logically a better Columbia. The very air is charged with his arithmetic; calculations buzz about your ears. "Columbia will have 100,000 students in—" how many years does the Butler say? We're lost already in the jungle of statistics. Let's come back to the present Columbia and her cozy little ten thousand.

In we come in September, this ten thousand, from Seattle and Kennebunkport, Shanghai and Chattanooga, school teachers and "educators"; men with kindly faces, baggy trousers, high foreheads; hard-working, tired, courageous, unfashionable women; girls preparing to teach, who some day, too, will be hard-working, tired, courageous and unfashionable; Westerners, Southerners, not many Easterners; men from every country on the globe, Hindus, Syrians, Japanese, Chinese, Russians; in undergraduate classes, many Jews, residents of New York; in domestic science courses, fiancées and housewives; in extension study at night, working men and women.

In we come, and if we all look foolish, bewildered sheep the first day or two, give us time. It is so big here! So impersonal! Many of us come from little towns, from small schools, at any rate, where we have been led to think that we're of the world's most extraordinary. And here. . . . Well, I am sent to "consult" as to my curriculum with a professor named Wright. I hasten to him, four blocks off in another building, burning with eagerness.

A queue of equally eager men and women is lined up at a desk behind which sits a listless young man with a cigarette. He is so languid and dispenses his advice so perfunctorily. I should rather like to sit next to him at dinner after a cocktail or two, for under that indolent exterior there is a spirit that could be touched off, I know, but now somehow I hanker for the great gold tooth belt where faculty advisers care passionately

whether you take Middle English or The Romantic Movement. And it is painfully obvious that this is the last question Mr. Wright cares about. He makes a slight gesture with his cigarette, murmurs a word or two. It really doesn't matter what you take, you know, he all but says. I go away, chastened, and believing him implicitly.

It is the same everywhere. One stands in line to register, to pay one's money, to get a meal, to buy books, to achieve a bath, and although there is courtesy—usually—every place, it is of that bleak, businesslike variety that seems to say: "We are polite to save time. Pray do not expect too much of us"; and one knows that these crisp manners will crack if too much of a load is put upon them.

But there is no time for wistful repining. Registration is over, and the great construction process is on. We attend class and set up a furious scribbling. A bell rings. We leap to our feet and with lowered head fly to the next class. More mad scribbling. An hour in the library behind a tower of reference books. Another class. This all day, every day, all year.

And in the pallid light of the library here I see no serene, contemplative brows of the old fashion, but fierce, studious frowns and a battery of eyeglasses and spectacles. There isn't a fresh cheek among us, or a young throat, or a single hilarious plot in all these heads to put sawdust in a fellow's bed tonight. There does exist a Barnard College where young girls are reported to be, but it is behind walls across the street, and we fear the girls are only rumor. There *are* undergraduates, hundreds of them, but they are changelings, old before their time, touched already by the taint of the place. The Freshmen wear silly green skull caps, after the way of all Freshmen, but the effect is one of senile facetiousness: these are little old men trying to be funny, and it is a trifle pathetic.

Where is that dashing, broad-shouldered footballish fellow with his chin in his sweater and a conquering pompadour, the accredited college chap? In Princeton, perhaps, or Yale, or the Fatima ads, but not here. Here we have earnest young men, solemn old boys, and lots of old, old girls. We are as standardized as flivvers, but not half so jolly.

But just as every Ford has a soul all its own—yours has a better engine than your neighbor's, of course—so the thousands of Columbians, in spite of their generic likeness, have their special traits, and finally their individual—well, we all have our peculiarities, you know. And so when I say that we're old and hard-working here, I must acquit the Southern girl of the charge. (There are droves of them in Columbia. Listen to campus talk a moment, and you'll think the map's gone crazy and this is surely the South.) For the Southern girl, it is easy to see, is never too old for the sparkling ha-ha, for the arch eye, for that type of lubricant known as soft soap.

And how disturbing this element can be in a circle of high thinkers! For just let the rest of us get hold of a really eligible man, say, the superintendent of schools of Waco, Texas, just let us all be having a royal good time over the latest break in the *Educational Journal*, and then let a maid of New Orleans walk in on us. Somehow—oh, that we *knew* how!—the talk shifts from the *Educational Journal* and the superintendent (such a nice man, too, under the right influence) begins to look long looks at the newcomer as she bubbles and chatters. The jig is up. We go gloomily back to the seminar room. Where it will end, heaven only knows. She may even go to the extreme of taking him to the Kindergarten's Club dance, who can tell?

For the Southern girls stop at nothing. They study a bit, it is true, in their own hasty, casual way, but they have not come to New York to

attend Columbia; they have come to Columbia to see New York, and theirs is an intensive study that only the voracious young can accomplish. And the stories they take back home! Stories of Chinatown and of Italian restaurants where wine was served in coffee cups! Stories of Wanamaker's and West Point and "The Bat" and the Astor Roof and Tiffany's. Their dresses have triumphant New York labels. They saw Norma Talmadge on the street once. They had their pictures taken by Bobby Edwards. They went to a first night. Oh, and oh, and oh!

But la, somebody has to eat fudge at midnight; somebody has to smoke cigarettes in the bathroom; somebody has to cut class and never, never learn the truth about multiple monadism. Our digestions, our consciences, our high purpose, could never stand it, so it might as well be the Southern girls. Besides, they are a good-natured lot, and usually when they borrow your clothes, they return them in the sweetest manner possible. (Not that a woman student ever has anything to lend, except a petticoat, perhaps, or a pair of overshoes. Room-rent and tuition come first, and the old blue georgette waist can just hold together another year, or there'll be one woman going about in her corset cover, and no two ways about it.)

II

OF course Mr. Butler's business has long ago burst its buttons. Flourishing businesses always do, I have read in the *American Magazine*. He has bought up all the apartment buildings he could lay a hand to, and converted them into dormitories, but still the wedge of New York between Harlem and the Hudson, 125th and 110th Streets, is too narrow, and so, as a deep fringe around the hem of the University there are the landladies of Morningside Heights.

Everybody up here takes at least one

roomer. It is a sort of civic duty. The poor students. They are the rock of civilization. They must be housed. Besides, they help pay the rent. And as you hunt for a room, up and down the side streets in the apartment houses packed closely together, you come upon the tribe of landladies; insistent, frowsy ones given to epithets such as "elegant" and "refined"; humble, beseeching ones whose rooms smell of age and dust; businesslike ones with rouged cheeks and jingling keys; jolly, dirty ones, large-busted, close-fisted.

Some of them allow "kitchen privileges" and some are offended deeply at the very suggestion. ("Kitchen privileges" means that in the morning you may enter the kitchen where in company with four or five other old girls in kimonos and curl papers you shake up some kind of meal for yourself at a cost of three cents more than a restaurant would charge.) Some furnish you with towels, and others indicate that, of course, since they never kept roomers before, they could not be expected to have sunk so low as towels. Some provide daily maid service. Some graciously allow you to spread up your own couch and dump your own wastebasket onto the dumb-waiter.

Cots and student lamps they all seem to have agreed upon as the two indispensables for students. As for the rest, you may have a closet, or a set of hooks in the wall behind dizzy cretonné; you may have a window on the street, or you may be on a court where the ash cans sing a morning greeting to you, and the cats howl you to sleep; you may have nice new mission furniture bought especially for this room, or you may be favored with a chair from the dining-room, the old walnut dresser that matched grandma's set, and that rug that had to be dyed after papa dropped the ink bottle on it.

Sometimes you live in blessed privacy, with only six or seven other

students in the apartment to keep the bathtub hot and the lights eternally burning. Sometimes you take unto yourself a roommate by the lottery method, a broadening influence, and so romantic, since you never know who it will be.

Thus you live as you can arrange to live, and according to the price you can pay, and if you're uncomfortable, —well, that doesn't matter much either. You are here to work, and soft living is not on your program.

Eating is, however, and if finding a room once is difficult, finding a meal 810 times during the school year is just 810 times as much of a job. Once you have a room, it is yours, however mean, but food does not stay by you to that extent, unfortunately. Blessed are those women who live in Whittier Hall, for all they have to do at mealtime is to choose between roast beef and flounder. But the rest of the University lines up where it can, at the Commons, table d'hôte dining-rooms, lunch counters, tea rooms, cafeterias, and prays that the manna will be forthcoming again tonight, even as it was yesterday. Every hole in the wall is an eating place, and it is hard to fail here in the restaurant business, if only you keep the price down.

There is Papa Fichl, he who timidly opened a miniature French restaurant four years ago and now has a great brightly-lighted place that looks like Childs' in Fourteenth Street. Papa Fichl's buns are famous if indigestible; they are weighted with sugar and spice and everything nice, and upon them he has builded as upon rock, in more than one sense. There is the Spinning Wheel, a teeming, steaming place where women eat frugally all day long; there is the Columbia Lunch where the boys stuff down Hamburg steak and mugs of coffee; there are a dozen dining rooms whose "plate dinners" are triumphs of simulation, and whose prices are compensatingly low. Yes, we eat up here, but in the manner of

haymakers, in a hurry to get back to work while the sun shines.

But over these clattering, hurried meals Romance, robust lady that she is, crowds the tables still a bit more. In the corner of Papa Fichl's a law student feeds his love on waffles and sausage (40 cents), while she, sweet creature, tells him all the news of Freshman Journalism. At another tables sits a shadowy old pair, an aged man sketchily connected with the University and an old woman who keeps him company. He puts salt in his coffee and explains why to a bored waiter who, however, summons what he probably considers a smile, while the old woman nods and humors the old man, as women do the world over if they know what they're about.

A genial fellow lopes in. His gray suit is wrinkled and loose-fitting, like an elephant's skin; his gait is not unlike that of the same animal. Behind him trots his heart's treasure, beaming at her luck. They will be married next year, and will go to live in Dakota, where he will be a high school principal. Here is a group of gay ones, Southern girls, of course, with a beau apiece. Hot chocolate and ice cream and *petit fours* for them, and high-hearted plans to go right back to Whittier Hall and have a fudge party. A wonderful apparatus is the Southern stomach. It has to be to resist Southern cooking, I suppose.

This is love-over-eats, and as love goes, not the lowest form, I suppose, but there is an orthodox time and place up here for Romance if she would just keep her shirt on, so to speak. There is Friday evening for calls, Saturday evening for dances, and Sunday for trips to church and the Palisades and the Jumel Mansion.

Whittier Hall, home of a thousand women, makes no bones of its encouragement to love and matrimony. It has gouged out a series of cubby-holes in its lower hall, christened them frankly "spoonholders" and

recorded them in a book for the purpose. If you want one, you sign up for it in advance. If he calls you up at dinnertime, on second thought, perhaps, or as a last resort, you walk him over to Riverside Drive and entertain him on a bench there. It is pretty romantic on Riverside Drive: the black water with reflected lights like handfuls of jewels floating there; the dear sailors hugging their girls to set an excellent example; castles at your back, which in the reality of day are known to contain all manner of greedy men, ugly women and stupid children, but at night rise to the blue like towers in a fable. Ah, yes, Riverside Drive will do very well if you can't get a spoonholder. And such a night is almost sure to produce an invitation of priceless value to the Western Club dance, for example, for which your heart has long been hungering.

You know these Western Club affairs and have taken them to your bosom. Such jolly affairs, so informal. (Westerners *are* breezy, you know.) The music may not be the best—for goodness' sake, *is* it a fox-trot or a onestep?—and your partner may be dancing the way they did when he was a boy in 1900—but the floor of Earl Hall is excellent, and the whole atmosphere is convivial. You haven't met it since Chautauqua-time out home. You can wear a baronet skirt if you like, or an evening dress if you have one. The men appear in variegated habiliments from white trousers to evening dress. But you all wear the name of your town pinned on your front, and everybody goes around and peers at everybody else's tag and then you shake hands and laugh, and you *do* have a good time. There is a circle and grand right and left. Once the lights flicker low and you have a good sentimental waltz just like high school days. Oh, if every night were Western Club night, what a paradise this would be! But Monday comes again, and with it nonsense is put

away in a lower drawer where it belongs.

III

WHAT a business man the President of Columbia is! One cannot but admire again and again the astuteness of a man who has said to his trustees: "Come, let us include in our curriculum every known subject in every known tongue in the world; let us send out our catalogues broadcast, and let other universities read 'em and weep—with envy."

"So be it," has replied the equally up-to-the-minute board of trustees.

And so it is. You can take a course in baby-feeding at Columbia or one in motion picture scenario writing. You can enroll for "Housewifery," where one of the studies is actually that of the proper technique of scrubbing, or you can go in for the History of Socialism. You can study old-fashioned English literature under Brander Matthews or new-fashioned dramatic criticism under a young man named Broun. Name it and you can have it, is the all-embracing theory upon which this University is builded. (Surely, its number of courses would have to approach infinity to accommodate that Columbia celebrity, the Perpetual Student, William Cullen Bryant Kemp, who has been taking courses in the University for over forty years. The story goes that William wouldn't study as a boy, and that a cagey uncle of his left a will providing for him as long as he was in the University. Whereupon William, equally cagey, settled right down to study the rest of his life, and now at fifty-something is still in the University earning his neat little annuity.)

To teach these thousand and one things that Columbia offers, there is a group of gentlemen—and some ladies too—picked for their especial talents, but with no thought to their congruity, so that one is almost incredulous before the gallery of portraits that this faculty of Columbia pre-

sents. These people are so dissimilar. There is practically no family resemblance. The same ideas are not circulating through these various skulls; these hundreds of pairs of eyes see not the same intellectual objectives.

Here is Professor Giddings, eminent sociologist in tails and heavy watch chain, speaking for two hours on "Civilization." His class is as polyglot as any of them; divinity students from Union Theological, fifty or sixty teachers out for an M.A., a few dignified Ph.D. candidates, Japanese and Chinese men, several "radical" young men who have an itch to heckle and do it on rare occasions, a blue-eyed youth strangely out of place gazing long at a young Russian girl whose sable braids are laid across her brow like mourning bands and whose eyes are the most melancholy things I have ever seen.

Professor Giddings is spreading before the class the story of William the Conqueror, in a portrayal as vivid as *Julius Cæsar*. He sets the stage with a careful, sparing hand and then brings on the hero with a rush. There is danger and battle and finally conquest. Giddings himself, thick-set, ruddy-bearded, is carried away by his own dramatics, and about that conventional figure of his leaps the white fire of exaltation. We are thrilled. You are old, Father William, but you never before were anything but a ghost in a dim, dull story that school teachers were fond of telling. Now 1066 stands in new letters on the calendar of our minds. . . . Giddings stops with his tribute to the old Norman, a grand-sounding summing-up that is like the final heroic blast before the curtain falls. We applaud spontaneously, and his coat-tails disappear around the corner.

Here is Brewster, the lank, soft-voiced and bitter-tongued critic of criticism. He says such demolishing things about the venerated—De Quincey, Hazlitt, Matthew Arnold—

in that laconic, silky way of his that students are wont to speak of his "destructiveness." They do not come to a university to be told that, after all, criticism is just one man's taste, after they have gone to the trouble of learning somewhere else that it is an art, or a business, or a game, with rules and standards. And Brewster gives you no facts. Your notebook doesn't fill up as rapidly as it ought to. How, then, can you cram for examinations? No, Professor Brewster's ears will never burn with undue eulogies from the student body. He is too upsetting. His fingers meddle too much with old idols.

Here is the young man named Broun, entering class with his hang-dog air. He has lost his notes, so he'll have to talk about something else. He hasn't a watch, so he borrows one; for of course he has never learned the intricate system of buzzes and bells that tells when his time is up. He forgot to announce it last week, but please have a paper in by Monday on—oh, anything connected with the stage, the shorter the better, no original plays, please. He drawls along in a low voice about the theatre. One morning he brings out a brisk little chap in a green suit, announces him as Alexander Woollcott of the *New York Times*, and departs, gleefully. Mr. Woollcott gives us a grand time. Tells us all the Broadway gossip, semi-intimate details about Ethel Barrymore and Frank Craven and Gilda Varesi. Mr. Woollcott is very breezy and entertaining, and we gallantly give him a hand. (Afterward, when we heard that this was his regular piece that he speaks before women's clubs and at dinner parties and everywhere, the agreeable feeling of special privileges was rather dissipated.)

Here is Terry, the thundering tyrant of the law school, who booms out his posers to quaking students, and when they answer wrongly, ridicules them with blasts of irony. Here is Miss Van Arsdale, sweetly

teaching dietetics, Talcott Williams lecturing on the past of Journalism, John Dewey outlining the future of education.

What an ill-assorted bundle of sticks it is, tied together by the cords of red tape.

And who tied the knot? Where is the master mind? Well, you don't expect to see him lolling around the campus, do you? He is not a President Eliot who rode a bicycle and mowed his own lawn, a President Lowell whose wife calls on you in the infirmary when you are sick and gives the best teas in Cambridge, a President McCracken who is as pleasant to talk to as a country doctor. President Butler is a power, felt but never seen, a king so wrapped in majesty as to be invisible. It is literally true that he is almost never apparent to the naked eye around the University. He shows up to preside over rare formal occasions, but otherwise he is not among us. His house, that brick barracks on Morning-side Drive, is an unfriendly presence among the babies and nurses and dogs; it is shuttered and curtained, aloof and austere. Once in a long while the shutters are opened, lamps are lighted and limousines begin to proceed up to the door. It is a grand dinner of some kind, but it has no relation to the University. But what are we thinking of? Mr. Ford does not go around petting his radiators? Why should Mr. Butler descend to vulgar personalities?

IV

It may have been gathered that the air of Columbia is none too balmy, that the fruits of our labors are born of thorns, and such an inference is not too far from the truth. And yet, for all this chill and discomfort and strain, there are high moments here. There is a certain sight that I shall ever see: that of the chapel lights through a little flaring spruce tree as one crosses the campus after a night's

grind in the library. I shall never forget one "Campus Night," pale imitation of a gala time, when we danced on the pavement in front of the Commons, crowded, bumping thousands of us, all under the common illusion that it was a rare experience. Those first days in Journalism under MacAlarney when one was sent out on an actual assignment, when we played so hard at being reporters that real reporting, when it came later, seemed easy—those days were productive of thrills that nothing else can ever quite yield up. As I go through life,

I shall ever look back with a sigh to the fried chicken of the Faculty Club, whose chef wields the meanest skillet this side of celestial cuisine.

And so we come here, and if we grumble at the worst, we snatch at the best. And if there are no high-sounding odes in our hearts to dear old alma mater and all that sort of thing, there is something in our heads—or so it is fondly supposed.

We come, and grumble, and snatch, and leave—and are faithful to thee, Columbia, well—after our fashion.

[The fourth article in this series is "Harvard," by Gilbert Seldes. It will appear in the next number of the SMART SET.]



Pomarosal

By Muna Lee

GROUND-FERN brushed your knee as we passed them,
Tree-fern dropped to my head,
And the stream at the foot of the mountain
Brawled with the fern in its bed.

Rose-apples blossomed above us,
White-flowered, poignantly sweet,
And the rain piled the fallen green apples
Into emerald heaps at our feet.

Rose-apples are lure and fulfilment,
Rose-apples are fruit and are flower,—
The rain built its gray walls about us,
The rose-apples roofed us an hour.

We went down through the tropic evening
When the gray rain had ceased to fall—
But one hour we were gods on a hill-top
In a blossoming pomarosal!



The Spell

By L. M. Hussey

I

ONE day the rumor was spoken about that Conchita Perez had engaged herself to marry old Dorfner, manager of the Caribe interests in Caracas. It spread like St. Anthony's fire through the American colony, but only as a pleasantry; no one gave the news any credence. It was the sort of rumor that made you laugh, through the incongruity of associating, in amorous relation, old Dorfner and the splendid Conchita, the "liberated woman."

Three days later the morning issue of *El Universal* published a startling confirmation. The Americans in Caracas found themselves staring at the front page whereon were imprinted the photographs of Dorfner, wearing his monocle, and Conchita, looking out boldly from the cheap paper, straight into your eyes. With Latin fancy the staff artist of *El Universal* had connected the two photographs with an embroidery of small, dropsical cupids, framing in the two faces together. A column of polite felicitations followed, under the pictures. The wedding was announced for the fifth of July, when the fiestas celebrating Bolivar and the national independence would begin.

Now, with the rumor confirmed, made certain and official, some of the more romantic folk were a little shocked. They contrasted the woman and the man, and could not reconcile their proposed marriage with what might be considered romantically fitting. Dorfner was a mummy, whereas Conchita Perez abounded with youth,

with an urgent vitality like a flame. An astounding alliance!

Of course, Dorfner's acquaintances hastened to congratulate him, and since they knew him as a garrulous old fellow, they expected him to expand, to describe the curious courtship, to reveal some of the mystery of his engagement. But he displayed an unprecedented reserve. He smiled, he twisted the ends of his white mustache, he looked out from under his drooping, brownish lids with a sort of fatuous expression in his filmy eyes, but he spoke nothing enlightening.

"Yes, I thank you," he said. "I appreciate your kindness. There is a great deal of good-will in the world. I appreciate it. Yes, it's true. I am going to marry Señorita Perez."

And then, whispering melodramatically, he would add:

"Conchita Perez is the most beautiful woman in Caracas!"

He maintained his reserve until the end. He was willing to embroider upon Conchita's virtues—her peculiar talents, her beauties, her courage—but he would not elucidate the mystery of his own relation to her. It was not until some time after the sudden termination of this affair that all its singularities were displayed, pieced together like the bits of a mosaic. Young Garvel told some of it, Conchita revealed a little to her friends, a few others knew fragments of the story. The synthesis was made after Dorfner's death.

II

HE was sent down to Caracas to put the affairs of the Caribe people in

order. The former manager of their office was an American named Harrison, a fellow who made a name in the city for conviviality, but, in establishing this reputation, found only casual moments for business affairs.

Dorfner was a meticulous man. He re-established the "system." He made the young clerks work once more, interrupting good times, and a protracted holiday.

When he first appeared in the American colony the tendency was to joke a little at his expense. He dressed somewhat ornately. On all public occasions he wore his monocle, he waxed the ends of his white mustache tightly, and carried a thick cane with a gold top. In the afternoon he wore a silk hat, a morning coat, and paraded El Paraiso riding in a victoria. From the immaculate elegancies of his dress emerged his curious, narrow head, his thin face covered with dry, yellowish skin like old parchment, ridged with a sharp nose, and set with filmy blue eyes like faded jewels. He was a small old man, and although his clothes fit him tightly, he gave the impression of having dried up a little within them.

Soon after his arrival he went to live in Señora Matos' *casa de pension*, the most comfortable one in the city. It was quickly observed by the guests that Dorfner could not converse, but only narrate—his stories were long, circumstantial, and tedious. They thought him a bore. They avoided him when they could. His only real friend in the *pension* was young John Garvel.

Garvel was imaginative enough to understand something of Dorfner's position, to appreciate a measure of his isolation. He grew sympathetic; Dorfner was a poor old man. One evening he suggested that they visit La Francia together.

They went to La Francia and ordered a bottle of amontillado. Sitting opposite, at the little table, the faces of the two formed a notable contrast. Garvel was young, his blond hair waved back luxuriously from his forehead, his skin was fresh, he seemed to emanate some

inner quality of youth, like an invisible ray. On the other hand, there was in Dorfner's face the curious suggestion of a resurrected mummy.

"I am a lonely man," said Dorfner, putting down his glass. "Ever since my dear wife died—God bless her memory!—I've never had a permanent home, no place to go back to, no hearth, no fire-side. Here I am in South America. When my work is done here, I don't know where I shall be; it doesn't matter. However, all this was predicted!"

Garvel seized his opportunity to interpolate a word.

"You say it was all predicted? Tell me, what do you mean, Mr. Dorfner?"

"I mean that I have foreseen this, it was revealed to me. Furthermore, it will not be the end. There's another sort of life coming to me. . . ."

He leaned across the table.

"Presently I intend to get married. . . ."

"Ah?"

Young Garvel's small grunt of surprise escaped him without intention. He flushed a little, fearing the old man might take offence. But Dorfner did not observe; he was not sensitive.

"I can't tell you just when it will be. In fact, I haven't met her yet."

"For heaven's sake, Mr. Dorfner, tell me what you mean!"

"Thirty years ago," he said, "I was in Calcutta. Just beyond the city they had erected an immense power plant. That place fascinated me. I used to go in the evening, just at twilight, to visit it. There were some big rocks outside the door, and there I would sit on the rocks and look in through the big door, watching the fly-wheel of that enormous engine turn around and around. You could not hear a sound but that, a sort of steady swish, like a thousand stiff, silk skirts being continuously rustled.

"One evening, when I arrived, there was a native sitting outside the door, in the place I usually occupied. He was very well gotten-up, wore a sort of a silk head-dress; it seemed to me he

was a Brahmin. I sat down. We did not say a word to each other. Presently he went away.

"I saw him there three or four evenings. We never spoke. We never said a word to each other until, finally, he spoke to me and he said: 'The science of the West is very remarkable. We have never cultivated that sort of science.' 'Yes,' said I, 'the men of the East should find our science a wonderful thing.' 'It is a wonderful thing,' said he; 'you have been able to do wonderful things with the present. But tell me,' said he, 'what have you done with the future?' I told him I did not understand. He said: 'Our philosophies have carried us into the knowledge of what is going to happen, what will happen. You know nothing about these philosophies. You do not know a thing about the future course of your own life!'"

"We met again, many times; sat there and talked to each other. We argued questions of cultural superiorities. Finally, during our last meeting, he said to me: 'I am leaving Calcutta tomorrow and I do not think we shall ever see each other again, my friend. I have prepared something for you. Take it, and read it, and probably you will not believe anything that I've written down. But preserve it. Check it up against the facts of your life, each prediction I've written. . . .'"

Dorfner's heavy, yellowish lids were lifted, the film had miraculously dissolved from his eyes and there was a curious and disconcerting power in the gaze with which he fixed young Garvel.

"Everything that was set down in that horoscope," he said, "has come to fact. My wife was described and the way I should meet her. I met her in that way, and the description was accurate. Her death was foretold, how she would die. She died in that way. After her death the Brahmin wrote that I would be a lonely man, until the second woman came into my life. A younger woman than myself. I have not yet met her, but it will come, it will surely happen!"

Garvel dropped his eyes beneath the old man's strange and surprising stare.

"We will know each other when we meet. I will know her, in the first moment. I'm almost an old man now, but so help me Heaven, she'll make me young again!"

Garvel laughed a little nervously. He was endowed with a touch of imagination, but otherwise he was a thoroughly normal young man. Old Dorfner still stared at him, stared out of his strangely transfigured eyes, under his thick lids, and the fire of an utter belief glowed in his eyes. To Garvel there was a touch of insanity in this, the abnormality of the fixed idea. But there was also a surprising, suggestive strength. There was nothing he could say. His aplomb was somewhat shaken.

"That . . . that's very interesting," he remarked, haltingly.

The old man was silent. Something passionate, a faith, a mad expectation, revealed for an instant behind his filmy eyes, seemed now to subside. He sipped at his glass, slowly.

"I'm a lonely man," he said.

"Look here!" exclaimed young Garvel, happy in this opportunity to shake off the discomfort of the past moments, "why don't you let me make you acquainted with some of the people here? I don't give much for the American colony—gossip, small talk, nothing else to it. But some of the Caracaniens themselves are worth knowing. There is my good friend, Señorita Conchita Perez. A remarkable young woman. She calls herself a 'liberated woman.' You'd be interested to know her!"

Garvel spoke with enthusiasm. His cheeks, nearly as smooth as a girl's, colored a little, and his eyes widened. He saw nothing to fear in Dorfner, no possible rivalry. Nothing to threaten his hopes. On the other hand, the old man would probably appreciate the sight of a handsome woman, and after meeting her would remark upon her beauty. Garvel's ear was hungry for this approbation.

So a day or two later he made the engagement with Conchita.

"The old fellow is lonely," he told her. "Really, I pity him a little. He's not uninteresting either; told me a remarkable story. Maybe he's a little mad. I think he might interest you."

III

THEY went up to the Perez house one evening after dinner in the *pension*. Old Dorfner was magnificent. His monocle ribbon was ornamented with an opal clasp. His shirt studs were three irregular black pearls. He carried a special walking stick, twisted at the handle into the head of a serpent, with two gleaming eyes consisting of small diamonds. When Garvel saw him he smiled.

They walked up the Paraiso enjoying the sea air that blew in to them over the top of the Avila. The city was lighted; each light was a burning jewel in the immense and sombre setting of the mountains. The noise of the day was hushed; you could hear the cathedral clock striking off the quarter hour.

Dorfner was talking, but the young man, engaging other thoughts, was content to let him talk without attending him. He was thinking, romantically, of Conchita. Her florid splendors ravished his imagination. He was even afraid of her; she made him timid.

Near the convent they turned in at the Perez house.

"Conchita is a liberated woman," whispered Garvel. "A strong personality. Her family never was able to dominate her. She threw over all the Spanish conventions like so much rubbish into an ash can. Walks on the street alone when she wants to. We won't be bothered with any old grandmother sitting in the *sala* with us when we call on her!"

They lifted the knocker and the blow resounded on the heavy door. An old *portero* opened it, grimaced and smiled when he saw Garvel, and led them into the *sala*. A woman stood up as they entered.

She was tall, almost as tall as Gar-

vel; she was slender and erect and her body was a subtle, turning curve from her high-arched feet to her head, where, abruptly, the symmetry of her person was broken. Her hair was too abundant; the great jet coils of it topped her head like the exaggerated turban of a Moslem prince, and it seemed that she must sway and tremble a little under its weight.

Garvel smiled, bowed, and turned to introduce old Dorfner.

The conventional words of introduction began their passage over his lips, and then declined into a stammer. He looked at Dorfner in alarm. The old man did not move, did not speak, but stood, just within the door, his eyes upon Conchita's eyes. There was a curious and vivid energy in his face as if the flame of his decaying life had, by a miracle, burned up bright again.

The woman was startled. Something of the coldness and reserve in her face was replaced by a swift expression of fear. She compressed her lips; she turned her head, meeting Garvel's astonished glance as by a physical effort.

The strange situation passed with the swiftness of its coming. Old Dorfner was bowing, smiling, mumbling words in Spanish.

"... mucho placer, Señorita."

They sat down to talk. Conchita talked, hurriedly, a little inconsecutively at first, like one whose nerves are jangling within. She was speaking of the Spanish women, the women under the Spanish tradition in South America and their complaisance to a system for which she had no word of good. Dorfner listened, smiled and spoke occasionally with an immense suavity. Young Garvel was silent.

He was, indeed, nursing an irritation. He had been an ass, he thought, in bringing Dorfner to meet Conchita. The old man was senile, half mad, no doubt. What was the meaning of his behavior on entering the *sala*? An idiotic pose? Or something pathological . . . apoplexy, perhaps?

Presently they all left the *sala*, going

out to inspect the *patios*. The moon was up and played romantically upon the fountains; Garvel drew close to Conchita for a moment. She turned her face to him, the cold and lovely mask of an ardent soul.

"I'm sorry," he whispered. "He's in his senility!"

"I don't know. Hush!" she commanded.

Dorfner, standing alone for a moment at the fountain, drew near to them. The moonlight gleamed palely on the glass of his monocle; his eyes gleamed bright under his heavy lids.

"What a graciousness in this civilization, *señorita*!" he exclaimed. "Something of the graciousness of an older time. Wasn't life better, even a hundred years ago?"

Conchita smiled.

"Perhaps it was. What do you think, *Señor Juan*?"

"Don't know anything about it," muttered Garvel.

She bent toward him swiftly; a faint air stirred with the swift turning of her body, and the scent of her perfume passed, momentarily, across his face.

"Irritable tonight!" she accused, whispering. "Don't come to see me when you are like this!"

Alarmed, Garvel tried to atone by growing loquacious and agreeable. They sat on a marble bench, opposite an inartistic sculpture of a dancing girl, which, in the moonlight, was forgiven the sins of its execution. An hour passed in conversation, the old *portero* brought out sweet liqueurs on a silver tray, and then the men stood up to go. Garvel took Conchita's hand, murmuring good-night. Dorfner bent low over her hand, repeating polite phrases again and again, like an automaton. The woman stood erect, frowning a little, looking down into his face.

IV

As they returned to the *pension* that evening, both men were silent, each engaging the intimacies of his own peculiar thoughts. Garvel was accusing

himself—of tepidities, of timidities.

The personality of Conchita reacted upon his mind like the call to some high purpose. Her vitalities astounded him, her slim, cold loveliness made him afraid. He gave himself up completely to the great illusion of loving her. The mystery of another race shone out of her midnight eyes, and sang to his imagination like a siren. She was, he thought, a notably precious thing, a slender jewel of sensitive, cold fires, wanted by all. His feet rang hard on the pavement. Why had he failed, so long, to take her!

The following evening Garvel attended a ball given by the American minister. He was an attaché in the legation and could not escape this social duty. But he knew that Conchita would not be present; she disliked these functions; she disliked, she said, the gossip of the women and the inanities of the men.

Garvel stood in the brilliantly lighted salon smiling automatically, and wishing himself with Conchita. A curious urgency possessed him.

"I must declare myself," he said. "I must think of some adequate words that will tell all I feel."

The following day he telephoned, asking permission to come in the evening.

"No," she said. "That's too bad, *Juan*, but not this evening. I'm engaged this evening. Tomorrow evening; any other time you please. . . ."

The prospect of an evening alone confronted him. He shrank from the notion of seeing any of his friends. Nothing invited him. Perhaps old Dorfner would try to corner him and pour into his ear, at one of the cafés near the plaza, those interminable tales, those monotonous, uninteresting stories. That would, indeed, be of all most disagreeable. And, curiously, the thought of old Dorfner made him uncomfortable. He cursed himself for his past sentimentalities. Dorfner was a bore—and a little mad.

After dinner, at the *pension*, he went into the *sala*, sat near the window

and stared out into the street. Then he saw Dorfner come into the room and stand in front of a pier-glass, arranging his little white dress-tie. The old man was resplendent again, with his jewelry and his sleek clothes, and his twisted, waxed mustaches.

Suddenly Dorfner turned to him and said:

"Garvel, the *Señorita* Perez is, undoubtedly, the most beautiful woman in Caracas!"

This sudden, cacophonous sounding of the chord that rang in his own mind continually made him start and flush. A curious anger flared up in his senses; he gripped hard at the edges of the chair. Twirling the waxed ends of his mustaches, old Dorfner left the room.

The next morning, leaving the Legation, young Garvel walked down to the offices of the Caribe Company, crossing the Plaza just as the cathedral clock struck off the hour of noon.

When he entered the Caribe offices the clerks were leaving, and he saw old Dorfner standing at his desk. The old man recognized him and smiled.

"Lunch with me?" he called.

"Well, yes," said Garvel. "That was my idea."

They walked back to the Plaza and entered La Cervceria. A waiter brought them cold meats, cheese, corn bread.

Garvel, burning with a slow, irrational anger, watched old Dorfner. Something in Dorfner's face puzzled him. The dry skin, the yellow, heavy eyelids, the twisted mustaches were unchanged, and yet, there was a vaguely new quality in the composition of these familiar features.

"Tell me," said Garvel at last, "what prompted you to make that remark to me last evening, Mr. Dorfner?"

"I don't just recall, Garvel."

"I mean, when you said: '*Señorita* Perez is the most beautiful woman in Caracas'."

"Well, my dear fellow, she is, most assuredly!"

"But why do you say that, Dorfner? Isn't it—well, isn't it just a little

familiar? I mean, considering that you've only met Miss Perez once?"

Dorfner looked into the eyes of the younger man and smiled. His eyes were no longer filmy; there was a surprising glow in them.

"My dear young fellow, I'm happy and immeasurably obliged to you that you gave me the opportunity to know the *Señorita* Perez. But I must correct your error. I saw Miss Perez—the *Señorita* Perez—only last night."

"Last night!"

Dorfner leaned over the table; his face grew tense.

"Garvel, you were the appointed instrument of fate! You took me to her!"

He relaxed again.

"Yes. Last night. And you will be the first I'll tell. It is a sudden thing; I'm more than happy—almost young again! All this was appointed to happen. I knew it, knew her, the moment I saw her there, standing in that room, like a flagflower. Garvel, *Señorita* Perez did me a great honor last night. She consented to be my wife. . . ."

The young man leaped out of his seat, overturning the flimsy chair.

"What a confounded lie!" he exclaimed. "Dorfner, look out for yourself; keep an eye on your wits, old man. You're losing your grip on things; you're going nutty. . . .!"

He turned abruptly, walked down the aisle of the tables and left the café.

The sun beat down warmly in the Plaza, and only an occasional figure appeared on the streets; all had retired to the *siesta*. Garvel, ignoring the heat, paced through the streets with a kind of madness in his steps, a mad confusion in his mind.

He traversed El Paraiso with the same resounding stride and, reaching Conchita's house, he thundered with the gilded knocker upon the thick, paneled door.

The *portero* answered his summons. Garvel pushed past him.

"Tell *Señorita* Perez I must see her," he said.

The *portero* hesitated.

"Get out of here, you corpse!" yelled Garvel.

The *portero*, paling under his dusky skin, shambled out of the *corredor*, and a moment later Conchita entered, with a strangely pale face.

"What is the matter, Juan?" she asked. "What has happened to you?"

He stared straight into her eyes, and he saw them widen, as if under the urge of a profound excitement.

"Conchita," said Garvel, "was Dorfner here last night?"

Her lips parted a moment before she spoke; she seemed to wait an instant, as if to gather the scattered power of speech.

"Yes," she answered, finally.

"I just lunched with him," Garvel went on. "The fellow is as mad as a hatter. He said to me: 'Señorita Perez did me a great honor last night. She consented to be my wife!'"

Repeating these words, they sounded then exquisitely ludicrous in his ears. He began to laugh immoderately, in rising and falling cadences. The woman, immobile as a sculptured thing, stared at him.

Abruptly his laughing ceased.

"My nerves are in tatters, Conchita," he said. "I've loved you for months. You've known that, but I've never said it to you, got it into acceptable words. You always made me afraid. . . . Sounds silly. . . . Night before last all this mad emotion seemed to boil up in me to the point where I could not contain it. I wanted to come here, tell you at once, get you up in the middle of the night and tell you that I loved you; I was half insane to come last night. When did that ass Dorfner make his engagement? But I'm here now, Conchita, telling you what's in my heart for you, something lighted and flaming. Conchita! I love you, Conchita . . .!"

He raised his face, and as he met her eyes again, she shrank back, covering her ears with her two hands. She pressed her hands tight against her ears, drawing back, shrinking.

"Juan!" she cried. "For the . . . love of Heaven, Juan!"

Then, still sealing her ears to the sound of his voice, to the words of his great illusion, she ran like a wild thing out of the *corredor*.

V

He stood staring hard at the rectangle of the empty door. He felt the room unreal, and all things about him part of an oppressive unreality.

"It is a fact," something said to him, remote and terribly calm. "Conchita intends to marry Dorfner. She only saw him twice, but she has promised to marry him. This can scarcely be true, but it is true."

His intelligence spoke to him, assuring him of the absurd fact, but still he stood in the room, staring at the door, waiting for reality to assert itself once more.

Finally he left Conchita's home and wandered out on the streets. Much later, after nightfall, he found himself sitting in a dirty little café near the Esquina de El Pajaro. He was seated at a table littered with cigarette ashes and several empty bottles. A strange young man, evidently his guest, was seated opposite. John Garvel was talking to him. For some reason Garvel's mind was emerging out of the fog of an unremembered afternoon. A profound bitterness dominated his mood like an attendant genius. As he spoke, the young man listened, understood little, and smiled with a weak amiability.

"It is a mistake," Garvel was saying, "to imagine that women are romantic. The men are the romantic sex. Women are materialists, the cheapest kind of materialists, *amigo*. According to their price, they can be bought. For instance, there was a woman I knew. A liberated woman. Bah! A man was in love with her, loved her as much as a woman can be loved, but she sold herself to a fossil, to a half loco old antique, for the sake of his money, the second or third time she saw him. The

Midas instinct. It's in all of them. Probably this old idiot has no money, after all, the old bluffer. That will be a joke—good Lord, what a joke!”

He held his head between his hands and laughed. Then, looking up, he stared at the dirty little room. Cigar smoke hung languidly in the air like the pall of a battlefield. The air was close, the smells were unpleasant. Garvel stood up abruptly, contending with a swift disgust.

“Good-night,” he said.

He walked out of the café and traversed the streets again. In a short time the city was behind him and he was in the small, rugged foothills of the Avila. He remembered his first ascent of the Serro de Cachimbo, how he had followed behind an old, barefooted guide, who leaped among the rocks with the ease of a puma. That was a long time ago. He had grown immensely older since then.

He went on, through the brush, through the tangle of vines, escaping falls by the miracle of some fifth, preservative sense. When he was exhausted he lay on his back and looked up into the sky, marking the gorgeous host of stars in their imperturbable remoteness. He grew calmer and presently he fell asleep.

VI

It was daylight when Garvel returned into the city again. He went straight to the *pension*, changed his clothes, and made his way to the Legation. He worked for several hours with a concentrated grimness.

At noontime Garvel went to his quarters, packed up his things, and later secured rooms at another *casa de pension*. He did not wish to meet Dorfner again. Bitterness and a dull rage possessed him like an obsession. He felt that the fantastic and unreasonable aspects of the whole affair might lead him into some foolish act.

A day or two later he saw the announcement of the engagement in *El Universal*. He tore the paper into

pieces and flung it on the floor. A cheap and sordid business!

He set himself to forget, but his romantic illusions would not allow him forgetfulness. The face of Conchita came up before his eyes like the features of a tormenting spirit. Again and again, to drive away his memories of her, he repeated his first hypothesis: she married herself to old Dorfner because she believed him rich.

One afternoon, assuring himself again of Conchita's low ideals, he suddenly found himself unconvinced. The whole chain of his reasoning seemed weak and silly. Conchita did not need Dorfner, needed none of the benefits he might bring. Her acceptance of him, then, was startling and mysterious.

The young man sprang up from his chair with flushed cheeks. Why had he never returned again to see Conchita? He remembered, with the vividness of an immediate event, her passionate cry as he declared his love to her. “Juan! For the love of Heaven!” That was not the cry of an indifferent woman!

He accused himself of a deep folly, and repeating these accusations, he took up his hat and hurried out to the street. He half ran along El Paraíso, while the ladies and gentlemen, riding out as was their custom in the afternoon, smiled at him from their victorias. He did not respond to a single salutation, and did not stop until he was at the door of Conchita's house, holding the heavy knocker in his hand.

He was about to let it fall, when it occurred to him that the *portero* might not give him entrance.

Dropping the knocker gently, he tried the knob. It turned; he pushed the door open and walked into the *corredor*.

Through another door he looked out into the *patio* and there he saw Conchita sitting near the fountain. She was alone; she was idle, staring at the water as it spread out fan-like into the air. With set lips he walked across the *patio*.

She heard his step, turned, and when she saw him she stood up swiftly

stepped back a pace or two, and raised both hands, as if in alarm.

"What are you doing here?" she cried, her voice low and harsh.

He did not reply until he faced her.

"I came to have you tell me the truth," he said.

"I've nothing to tell you. How did you come in? Did José let you in?"

"I won't go until you tell me the truth. . . ."

They looked, one at the other, like the antagonists of a desperate duel. Then, relaxing the rigidity of her body a little, Conchita sat down, averting her head.

"I am willing to be friends with you," she said, "but you must go now; please go now. I can't talk to you, Juan!"

He said nothing. A bird flew over the *patio*, calling in a shrill, monotonous whistle. The palm-fronds waved back and forth in the breeze and their shadows played over the mosaic of the fountain. The water made a small, continuous noise, like the rustling of leaves, as it fell. There were no other sounds.

The man and woman waited, each supported by an inner determination.

The silence continued. Garvel sat with the immobility of a carved figure.

Then, unable to endure the taut misery of her nerves, Conchita turned abruptly and seized his arm. Her slender fingers circled it tightly.

"For heaven's sake, go, Juan! Don't stay here to drive me crazy!"

"For heaven's sake, tell me the truth, Conchita! You can't care for Dorfner!"

"I can't. . . ."

"You must tell me!"

"I . . . I don't know how. . . . Juan, it isn't *reasonable*!"

She met his eyes now; her face was white and all the pride seemed gone from it as if a mask had been torn aside. Her dark eyes glowed intensely.

"I think he's crazy!" she said. "I think he's made *me* crazy!"

Garvel, meeting her eyes with his face close to hers, waited.

"The first evening you brought him here he startled me. His eyes startled me. When he came into the room I

saw him as a little, old man—and then he looked at me. You remember? You've never found anything disconcerting in his eyes? He stared at me. Something horrible happened in his old eyes then, a terrible transformation, as if the old man were only a shell, one of those funny plaster figures that walk about during carnival, and some other eyes were looking out from within him. His eyes became terribly alive—yes, they became *young*!"

She drew a deep breath.

"He called here two evenings later. At first he only bored me. I began to think I had only imagined the former change in his eyes. Then he began to tell me of one time in India. . . ."

"Ah!"

The exclamation escaped Garvel without his volition, but he nodded for Conchita to go on.

"He told me that all his life had been foretold, and each fact of the prophecy had happened. 'I've waited a long time,' he said, 'for the coming of the last event written in my horoscope. Señorita, I knew you at once. I knew you for the woman when I came into this room that night. It was like a blinding revelation; I couldn't see anything but you.' Juan, he seized my hands and looked at me with a terrible determination, a frightful sureness. He repeated, over and over again, his belief in that one fixed idea. I was his predestined woman. I tried to laugh, tried to laugh him away from me, but I wasn't strong enough to laugh at his belief. I felt my will weakened, weakening. He believed too terribly in the truth of his own discovery. An absolute belief is a dreadful, strong thing. Unless you can laugh, Juan, it overwhelms you. I never saw anyone with an absolute belief before. It was ridiculous and august at the same time. All the time he was looking straight into my eyes, with that terrible change in his own eyes, those terrible, other, *young* eyes looking out at me from the old man's shell, and wanting me. . . ."

She pressed her face into her hands.

"When I looked away from him I

thought I would have the strength to laugh at him, but in a moment he would fix me with his eyes again, that terrible faith and belief in his eyes. It seemed hours to me. I felt weak. I tried to be angry, angry with my own weakness; I was too weak for anger. I don't know how long he remained, but it seemed hours. He did not plead with me, but commanded me, overcoming me, little by little, with something so strange, so strong and unnatural, that I could not resist.

"He overwhelmed me," she said, speaking between her fingers. "I—I guess he made me a little crazy. He said: 'I'm going away from here tonight with your promise, Señorita! I'm going out and say that you've promised to be my wife!' I couldn't answer him. I . . . I let him go!"

She looked up at Garvel, fright in her face.

"He did what he said he'd do," she whispered. "You know that. It astonished me; I read the announcement in the paper. I was afraid to do anything; I haven't known what to do! That's the whole truth; I don't seem to have any nerves left; I haven't known what to do. I was even afraid of *you*! But, why didn't you come back to save me!"

Garvel, his heart beating quickly, sat looking at her. He was feeling a new thing in his love for Conchita; he was feeling a warm flush of tenderness and pity. He pitied her weakness, and felt strong on account of it. He marveled at the delicate responsiveness of her mind. A curious, strange woman! He could not imagine a woman of his own race acting in just the same way. He felt the rapid beating of his heart, and a certain mastering strength in himself.

"Conchita, *mi amor*!" he cried. "I understand, and now I'm going. You must wait for me here. I'm going to see Dorfner. I will. . . ."

"What do you intend to do?" she cried suddenly.

"Don't ask me what I intend doing," he answered.

He ran across the *patio*, fearing she

would run after him, and hold him back. But she did not arise; she sat, looking up, alarm on her face, following the running figure with her eyes.

VII

GARVEL hurried to Señora Matos' *pension*. Dorfner, he knew, would be in his rooms at this hour.

He rang the bell, and was admitted. "I'm going up to see Señor Dorfner," he said.

As he entered Dorfner's sitting-room he saw the old man bowed over a desk, writing.

Dorfner turned, saw him, and smiled.

"My dear young friend!" he cried. "What has happened to you? Why has it been so long since I've seen you?"

He held out his hand, but Garvel ignored it.

"Will you sit down and talk to me, Mr. Dorfner?" he asked.

The old man, looking at him with an expression of curiosity, resumed his place at the desk. He sat with his back to the desk, and looked fixedly at young Garvel.

"This afternoon," said Garvel, "I saw Señorita Perez. . . ."

"Ha!" interrupted Dorfner, his heavy eyes lifted a little. "The most beautiful woman in Caracas!"

"Yes! The most beautiful woman in Caracas. A *young* woman, Dorfner!"

The old man started a little; his eyes widened at the vehemence of his visitor.

Garvel sprang up, out of his chair.

"You're not going to marry Conchita!" he cried. "You're mad, Dorfner, you're a paranoiac; you've got a fixed idea. She was too sensitive to resist you. But, by Heaven, now you're going to see yourself for yourself!"

Dorfner stood up. A dull red shone under his dry yellow skin. He tried to straighten his shoulders, to draw himself up to the height of his indignation.

"Sit down!" Garvel commanded.

For a second the two men faced each other, like antagonists.

Then the older man, appearing to shrink a little, resumed his chair.

"When I leave here," Garvel went on, "go into your bedroom and stand up in front of your mirror. Look into it, examine your face, your own face! Hold up your hands in the mirror and see them there; the reflection won't lie to you. Look at your old face, your old hands, your old, stooped body. You're an old man, a mad old man. A fixed idea. . . . Stand in front of your own mirror and look one by one at the wrinkles in your face, the old, wrinkled skin, the old, pouchy eyes. Try to straighten your shoulders and stand up erect; you can't. You're old. *You're an old man!* You shan't sacrifice Conchita to your crazy idea. You are trying to make the silly writing of some fantastic fortune-teller come true. You can't do that. Life won't allow you to do that. You're an old man. You're old, Dorfner, *terribly* old!"

There was no sound in the room but Garvel's voice, rising, growing shrill.

His words beat into the old man's ears like physical blows; each bitter word was a cruelty that tormented him like a man losing one by one the articles of his faith on the torture of the rack. He fought against the truth; he fought madly against Garvel's revealing words, but each cruel sentence weakened him.

After a time he no longer distinguished the sentences. He did not even know that Garvel had left the room. He looked up in surprise and found himself alone; the room was silent.

Garvel waited downstairs, sitting in the *sala*. He was determined to renew the attack. When Dorfner descended, he would seize him by the arm, make the old man walk with him on the street. In that moment he was pitiless.

As he sat waiting he was startled by the noise of an explosion. He sprang to his feet. Someone ran through the hall. There was the noise of steps running on the stairs. Voices began speaking

all together. Then one of the guests burst into the *sala*.

"Hurry!" he cried. "Help me find a doctor. Old Mr. Dorfner has shot himself through the head. I'm afraid he's passed out already!"

Garvel watched the fellow rush from the room, and then he turned slowly and walked out into the hall. Excited voices reached him from above. He paused a second, and then went on.

Out on the street he still walked slowly. A curious sense of his own weakness enervated his steps. A moment before, at the crest of his mood, when a bitter cruelty possessed his spirit, the thought of this event would have made him glad.

Now, without feeling remorse, he felt helpless. He had been the agent of the old man's death. But he, himself, had been only an instrument, the tool of a tremendous necessity. He had followed the urge of his own immense wanting, his great, romantic desire. In that he had been ruthless, like a fate.

Again he came to Conchita's home. He found her waiting in the *patio*.

She sprang up when she saw him.

"Dorfner is dead," he said.

Her eyes seemed to fill all her strained, white face.

"You!" she exclaimed, half in a whisper.

"No," he answered quietly, a little lifelessly. "He killed himself."

They stood looking at each other.

"We'll have to forget this," he said.

After a moment she nodded.

"He came into our lives like a nightmare. . . ."

Garvel took her hands. They looked at each other, and as they stood, hands together, looking into each other's eyes, their own illusions, their own high dreams arose in their minds and shadowed every other fact. They were free, free for each other, with all the mad urge and expectancy of youth in their hearts.



Associate Professor Quinby of the English Department

By John Towner Frederick

I

QUINBY pushed his tumbler meditatively back and forth across the smooth top of the little table, peering meanwhile into the front part of the restaurant. He was wondering about Bernice Kralik. The men who ate there at the counter were bantering her as usual, and she was replying spiritedly. It was so hard to tell whether or not she enjoyed the life of a waitress. He thought, however, that she was hardly holding her own against the degrading influences of the place.

It was really Mrs. Quinby's fault, he reflected, that this interest in a waitress had been forced upon him. When she had learned that he was to teach in the summer session of the University she had declared flatly that she would go to the lakes: he could board at a restaurant. He had come to the "Olympian" because it was quiet, never crowded or rushed. And although the food was poor, he had remained—partly, as he admitted to himself, on account of Bernice Kralik.

Well, the summer session work was light; he was finishing his book on Crabbe and Wordsworth. That meant a full professorship for next year, the President had promised: he would be the youngest ranking professor in the faculty, as he was now the youngest doctor of philosophy. If only the problem of this girl did

not keep crowding into his consciousness.

It was really a desperate problem, of that he was convinced. She was so pretty, so young, so full of intelligence and energy, of capacity for life; and yet any day her whole life might be spoiled, ruined through the destructive force of her surroundings.

It was in a sense none of his affair, perhaps; but could a man of decent spirit watch such a tragedy unmoved? And, too, her manner toward him had seemed in some way appealing. She was particularly attentive to him, prompt and careful in serving his meals. And if after indulging in an exchange of repartee with some counter customer she came to wait on him, she would stand before him with downcast eyes, blushing and demure, as though to apologize for what she had done. He felt that she sensed in him the only clean, safe thing in all her world, and that she turned to him wistfully for encouragement, perhaps for help. He could not shake off a sense of responsibility.

He had thought much of having a little talk with her, possibly to suggest some other, less dangerous work—at any rate, to express his sympathy and interest. He felt sure that he could help her. But he had hesitated from day to day, knowing all the time that things were getting worse. The leering pursuit of her by certain loafers was all too vulgarly manifest. And so, when she had

brought his customary dessert tonight, he had asked her name.

She had started prettily, and blushed.

"Bernice Kralik," she half whispered, setting down the raisin pie with ice-cream. "And is there anything else you wanted tonight?"

She fingered her package of checks, and at his negative pulled one from beneath the rubber band and punched it deftly. But as she laid it carefully, face down, beside his plate, she raised her dark eyes to meet his, and he read in them a wistful gratefulness which stirred him strangely.

With a sigh Quinby drank the rest of his water, took his hat from a hook on the wall, and walked slowly toward the cash register in the front part of the restaurant.

The Greek proprietor had gone to the drug store next door for change. A small, greasy young fellow, the last of the counter customers, was talking to Bernice. As Quinby paused he heard the girl addressed with a foully familiar epithet that seemed to turn her squarely around, her back to the speaker. He could see the swift red flame up in her neck and cheeks. With blazing eyes he turned upon the fellow.

"Get out of here, at once!" he commanded fiercely.

The stubbly jaws fell apart, releasing a cigarette which fell to the floor. Recovering it hurriedly, the fellow backed away and started toward the door.

Quinby stepped behind the counter, close beside the girl.

"I want to talk to you," he told her earnestly. "When do you get through tonight? I want to see you."

"At nine o'clock—but you can't come here—the boss would be sore—"

"But he wouldn't care about me," he urged eagerly.

"I'll meet you by the fruit store around the corner—you know the one. . . . Here's some customers!" She brushed past him, and turning

he saw two ladies by the candy counter staring curiously in his direction. He bowed mechanically, not recognizing them at first—oh yes, the librarian and her sister. At this moment the proprietor entered, and Quinby paid his bill and walked away.

II

THE book did not go well that night. Relations between Crabbe and Wordsworth had never been so elusive. There was a Humanist Society lecture which he ought to attend: but it would not be ended until after nine.

He thumbed over his notes, made false starts at the writing, at last snapped off the light and went downtown. In a moving picture house near the campus he sat through reel after reel of meaningless emotion. At last the clock up in the wall showed ten minutes of nine, and he fumbled his way down the aisle and outside.

It was a warm, cloudy night. Springlike winds rustled down the quiet streets. Students in couples passed him, talking in low voices. At the fruit store he consulted his watch. It lacked three minutes of nine.

He walked past and to the corner. She was not in sight. He sauntered back, peered idly into the windows of a ten-cent store studied the smirking faces in a photographer's display. Perhaps she would not come—had not meant to come; perhaps she did not care for his interest.

At ten minutes after nine he rounded the corner, determined to walk past the restaurant and look in the window. But when he was halfway down the block he saw her come out slowly, and then, turning in his direction, begin to run. He waited, and stopped her. She looked up into his face, rosy and smiling.

"I'm so sorry I was late," she breathed. "They were so busy I couldn't get away."

He noticed a faint fragrance. Her cheek was daintily powdered.

"Where do you live?" he inquired.

"Down by the river." She gestured vaguely. They were walking down a sloping, elm-shaded street along the edge of the campus.

"I have been wanting to talk to you for a long time," Quinby began. "Don't you get tired of working at the restaurant?"

"You bet I do, sometimes; but I got to work. I ain't been at it long, though. There ain't any good place to talk, at home," she suggested delicately, as Quinby was silent, pondering his next speech. "But there's a good place up here."

She guided him across a corner of the campus to one of the deeply recessed windows of the Law Building.

"I've seen students here lots of times," she explained.

The place was in shadow so deep that Quinby felt about with his hands before he trusted himself to sit down. The girl sat close beside him. The fragrance of her hair was in his nostrils.

"Don't you think you might like to try some other kind of work?" he urged. "I hate to see you in that place."

He felt that he was going at it rather awkwardly; still, there had to be a beginning.

Her face turned up toward him, dim in the darkness.

"I don't know," she whispered.

Quinby felt uneasy. Just where was he getting, anyway? She was warm and soft against him. Her voice was dreamy.

"Of course," she was saying, "if you knew of a better place—"

He started at a sudden thought. His heart quickened. Did she think he meant—yet she was so demure and girlish, so innocent. Certain things he had seen and heard at the restaurant came back to him; he realized that he was very inexpert in such matters. He must make a new start, explain clearly what he meant.

Detachedly he watched the people filing out of the lighted building across the corner of the campus,

hurrying away from the Humanist Society lecture in twos and threes. The groups began to pass along the shadowy walk a few feet from their window, talking of the lecturer. He would wait until they had passed.

Suddenly a car backed into the street from the parkway beside the opposite building. Its undimmed headlights bored through the shadows and rested for a moment full on their window, filling the recess with blinding light and silhouetting the shapeless forms of two women approaching along the walk a few feet away.

The girl hid her eyes from the light against his shoulder, then turned to look at the women. With freezing horror Quinby met the astonished, comprehending eyes of the librarian and her sister. He could not bow or speak. Then the light abruptly swung away, leaving him blinking, and the women hurried on, breathlessly silent.

Quinby felt his world swim around him. He knew within twenty-four hours every member of the faculty, every faculty wife, even the students, would know of this: that Associate Professor Quinby of the English Department—Doctor Quinby—had been sitting in the window of the Law Building at night with a waitress at the Greek restaurant. He remembered the curious stare of the women by the candy counter. He thought of his unexplained absence from the lecture. The President would hear of these things: the full professorship would go glimmering: a maelstrom of troubles had caught him.

He felt a gentle hand on his arm. He looked down into warm, caressing eyes very close to his.

"I thought you was asleep," she whispered.

Suddenly hard desire for compensation flamed through him. He circled her with his arms and drew her soft self close against him.

"Not on your life, kid!" he told her distinctly.

A Pilgrim and a Stranger

By Ruth Suckow

I

OLD men came day after day to sit out on the green-painted iron benches around the Court House square in Denver—old fellows, leftovers, some bums, some respectable in decent clothes. They sat there talking, about politics and prices. Some had errands in town for their wives or daughters as an excuse for coming. Here and there was a silent young man or a bored solitary stranger.

There were a number of them to-day—a burning blue September day. There were the three old fellows who made a business of coming—the ancient, doddering, one-eyed man, the little, neat, pathetic one with the precise ostentatious speech, and the tall sour one with the drooping mustache. And another who was often there—a skinny, pitiful old creature with bleared, frosty eyes and frayed greenish clothes. He kept edging up to the others and trying to get in a word. One lonely youth sat apart, with his knees crossed and his green felt hat pulled low over his eyes, staring sombrely at the shops across the street.

People passed in a desultory way along the sun-filled streets. Yellow leaves slid through the air and rattled along the pavement. The old fountain in the square kept a thin silver veil of water between the old men's eyes and its group of tarnished gilded ladies. The sky was blue; bluer than summer. But a little brown was creeping over the pink geraniums and the heliotrope in the flower beds.

The words that the old men spoke

were detached, idle, sounding a long while in the clear warm air. The clang of street-cars sounded, and steps along the pavement.

The one-eyed man said in his toothless, hissing voice:

"I ain't seen the fellow who's staying with his son. Wonder if he's gone back to Iowa."

"He'd be there about one month," the mustached man said, "above the sod."

"A terrible cough," the little man said with satisfaction.

"It's getting better now, though, seems like."

"Aw, getting better. Just one way it'll ever get better."

The ragged man edged up closer. His meager, frost-bitten nose seemed to point and sniff the air.

"That looks like him coming now. Don't it? Up there?" he said in an eager, furtive way.

They never let him into their discussions, although he always snickered at the jokes and listened avidly to the opinions. He all but nudged the one-eyed man, stealing glances at the eyeless lid that remained calmly, motionlessly closed.

They leaned forward and squinted until they could make out the one they were discussing from the thin stream of onward-moving people—an old man in a loose black suit and a brown felt hat, with bundles in his arms and leaning on a cane. Immensely tall and thin, so thin that his body seemed hardly able to hold up the great hunched shoulders or to belong to the large shuffling feet.

As he came nearer his weather-beaten face showed with eyes of that amazing blue that only old people and little children have.

"Howdy, how-d'-do," they all called. "Better set down awhile."

He let himself down on a bench, panting and wiping his tired, staring face. A film came over the blue of his eyes. He coughed—the terrible rumbling cough that comes from exposure to the weather. It pulled up his shoulders and hunched him over in a grotesque way. He leaned back and wiped his face with an immense blue bandanna handkerchief. The others were all watching.

"Well, how's the cough?" the little man asked cheerfully.

"Oh—this doctor here seems to think it's better," he said huskily.

"I can't see's it is."

"Well, sir," the one-eyed man said, "a cough's a terrible thing to get started. Awful hard to get rid of it once you've got it."

"You find it improved, however, since you came to this climate?" the little man asked.

"I can't see's it is. *They* all try to tell me 'tis," the old man said gloomily. "I can't see's there's so much in this climate as they all let on."

The sour-faced man said with cynical enjoyment:

"Say, zit taken yeh this long to find that out? They's more bad weather here take it all together than I ever seen in the State of Indiany, but it's always unus'al. The old settlers ain't never seen anything like it. Psho, it's a lot of bunk! It's a lot of bunk to get poor sick people out here and get the money out of 'em," he cried fiercely.

"Oh, now, I can't allow that," the little neat man expostulated. "It's noted for being a very fine climate. Take my wife—at this time of the year, in Dundee, she would have been wretched with hay fever. But she has been entirely free from it ever since we came out to Colorado, fourteen years this — November, if I recall correctly. Dundee, New York," he explained hastily. "Our

former home. I was connected with a bank there."

"I hain't got any kick on the climate," the one-eyed man said. "I'm what they call an old settler here. Been here thirty-five year. I've seen bad weather and I've seen good. Take it all in all, I'd say it's pretty good."

"Oh, yes, it's a very fine climate," the little man said, sedately.

"Far as I can see," the sour old man said, "folks die here same as they do anywhere else. The graveyards are as well populated here as in any other place." He looked around agonizedly for a place to spit that wasn't against the law.

"We came here for our daughter's health," the little man said with his small pompousness.

"She git well?"

"Oh, yes. Married now. Has a child—a fine little boy, looks very much like his grandfather, according to the general opinion. They do not live here, however. Her husband—"

"I sh'd think you'd hev gone back to New York," the sour man interrupted. "Banking business is a pretty good business."

The little man replied with reserve—"No. No, we preferred to remain here. My wife. She is conducting a business—well, she and I together. She has most of the practical management. She deals in hair goods."

There was silence.

The old man from Iowa moved clumsily—leaned slowly over to pick up a bundle.

"Been making some purchases?" the little man chirped.

"I get a few things now and then for my daughter-'n-law."

He turned his blue eyes mournfully toward the fountain. A few yellow leaves floated on the dark water near the stone rim.

"Well, now, sir, you wouldn't be having weather like this this time of the year in Iowa, I'll warrant."

"It's awful dry. Dry enough to have the corn burnt up," he muttered. He got up, fumbled for his stick and all

his bundles. "Well, I suppose she'll be wanting some of these things. Good day to you."

They watched him move slowly off toward the street-car track and stand on the wrong corner.

"He ain't satisfied. He won't stick it out," they said.

II

THE car the old man was waiting for came. He looked at it dazedly as it went past him, then limped as fast as he could to the place where it stopped. He thought—dang it, these cars never did seem to stop twice in the same place! He stepped back to let a haughty henna-haired person in a Georgette frock and a fur sweep past him, then lifted himself painfully onto the step. The conductor stood with his hand impatiently on the bell. The old man swayed uncertainly to a seat as the car started.

He sat there, holding the bundles loosely in his big hands, looking with vacant blue eyes out of the window. The Court House passed—the old fellows on the benches were gone—

But they were a queer lot, anyway.

He always felt a little disappointed and lonely when he tried to talk with them. That little fellow, now—"hair goods"—what kind of a person was he? They all seemed so rootless, so homeless and strange. Now, the fellows that hung around the restaurant and Grawe's store at home—he knew the name and family of everyone, just what he did and where he belonged. They were satisfactory and real. But these men—they made him feel unreal himself, as if he were just in the air with nothing to tie to. Not a one of them would care if they never saw him again.

He coughed.

"It ain't any better," he thought, with pleased pessimism.

Still, he knew that his chest hurt less than at home. And it was true that he hadn't been able to go about this way there for the last six months. But he wasn't going to admit it to any of them.

S. S.—Jan.—8

A gap in the buildings showed the chain of mountains, dim blue with faint streaks of silver. He looked dispassionately at them. He thought, "I'd give the lot of them for a real cornfield."

Those fellows down there—he didn't believe there was one of them who would know a real ear of corn when he saw it.

The corn would be ripe "back home" by now. They would be cutting and shocking and feeding silo. He had never missed out on it the way he was doing now. It didn't seem like fall.

The car turned away from the mountains and went sliding easily down long curving streets, between old-fashioned brick houses and new bungalows showing bright through the glitter of cottonwood leaves and the cloudy yellow-green of silver maples. No red in the autumn here—sumach or woodbine or hard maples. It was all yellow and shining and light.

He kept watching for the little brick Episcopal church—saw it and got out at the right corner this time.

He had two blocks to go to his son's house. He limped along drearily. He glanced wistfully toward the shining windows of the corner drug store, but "the fellow in there," to whom he talked sometimes, who came from White Oak, only sixteen miles from home, was busy. How queer and lonely it was not to have anyone call out—"H'lo, Enos"—"Good day, Mr. Bush"—"Well, what kind of weather are we going to have?"

He came to the house, a pretty bungalow of frescoed brick, with a sun parlor, and with red geraniums and ferny things showing in the green porch boxes. The little terraced lawn was littered over with yellow leaves from the silver maple tree. The old man's heart lightened. Here was something he could do. He could rake the leaves.

He went onto the porch that was deep and cool and half hidden by the vines that were turning brown. The low wicker chairs were empty. They rocked a little, lightly, in the breeze.

The door was locked but the key was

in the mail box. He went into the house that had a motionless cool feeling of emptiness.

He tiptoed guiltily. They must have gone somewhere. It gave him a feeling of relief.

He took the bundles out to the fresh sunny kitchen. There were small casement windows above the sink. Through them he could see leaves drifting. A dish of red apples stood on the cupboard ledge.

He looked about, feeling guilty again, not because "she" would care, but because he was all alone in the house. He said, "Oh psho!" and took one. He sat down in the small white-enameled chair by the kitchen table, but it was too little and too flimsy for him. He went into the living room and sank into the great tapestry-covered easy chair by the empty brick fireplace. He ate his apple noisily and at ease. It was cool and shadowy by the fireplace—the cool of bricks and cement. But sunlight came in through the western windows.

As soon as he had got his apple eaten he would go out and rake up those leaves. Get it done before any of them came home to protest and tell him he ought to be resting.

He threw the core into the cavern of the fireplace and poked it away in where it couldn't be seen. It was a good apple—but not like the little russets on the tree back of the house at home. It wasn't the same to eat an apple out of a dish as to pick it off the ground, warm with sun, and brush off the dry shreds of grass sticking to it, and eat it out there under the trees where it didn't matter what a fellow did with the core. But it was a good apple. He could have got away with one or two just like it.

Now things didn't seem so bad. The doctor had told him he'd have to stick it out here if he wanted to last out the winter—and then no telling how long he might live. Maybe he could. Harry had things nice here, all right. He had done pretty well for a boy just off the farm, and the way he'd put himself through college and all.

It was a nice enough little place that he had. Maybe there'd be other jobs this fall even if the garden was about the size of a girl's handkerchief and if Eleanor took care of the flowers. He felt quite rejuvenated with the prospect of the leaves—although he had a sad wonder as to who would rake them in the old yard this fall, a vision of them drifted up into a corner of the fence. Yet even last fall it had been all that he could do to clean up the place. He wouldn't have lasted much longer there, that was the truth.

He went to the door. The lawn looked very clean beside the walk. He saw a bicycle leaning against the terrace, and then he saw the red-haired boy who cut the grass and cleaned the ashpit come busily along with the rake—already at it.

He went in and sat down again. He knew that it was for his own sake that they would not let him do anything—but this made him all the more resentful. They were so afraid—so afraid he might do a little—their watchfulness and their fussing filled him with stubborn helpless wrath. The anger which he felt at his disease he transferred to them. Always watching him. Always looking out for him. Telling him not to do this and not to do that.

He fell into a black pit of homesickness. All he could think of was Golden Prairie, the little town with the black roads between the big trees, the restaurant with the bench in front of it, the house on the edge of town where he and "ma" had been living ever since they had moved in and left the farm to Jos—the old white house and how it would be looking now, with the yellow seed corn hung up in the porch to dry and the gourds on the rail, ripening, the hard maple out by the walk just turning, the brown leaves and apples under the russet tree, the grape vines along the back fence—those were the things that made fall. Maybe it wasn't such nice weather there, as that old fellow had said. Maybe the sky and the woods were gray, and rain was lashing the last leaves off the trees, water

was standing in black puddles in the road, blackbirds were whirling up crying from the sodden cornfields. . . . It was what he wanted. It was home. He breathed hard and twisted in his seat.

Something desperate and inarticulate grew in him. He couldn't stand it. He had to get back. Somehow—anyhow. No matter what happened. Here he was not himself. Was this living?

III

THERE was a flutter and rustle and sound of voices on the porch. They had come back—"the women folks."

"Oh, father's here—the key's out of the box," he heard Eleanor say gaily. He kept on sitting by the fireplace, staring and glum.

They came in hurried and talkative, Eleanor fragrant and rustling in modish silks, "ma" a little excited in her best black taffeta.

"Oh, here you are, father! You got home before we did," Eleanor cried. She hurried on with a faint, pleasant swish of silks. "I'll just take off my hat, mother."

The old lady said in explanation: "I didn't know we'd be gone so long. She wanted me to go to some club with her. A woman spoke. It was real nice."

The old man did not answer. She glanced at him uncertainly. She said: "Ain't you feeling good, pa?"

"I'm feeling all right."

"I bet you walked too far in town."

Then she said with a sigh: "Well, I better change my things and help her with the supper. I didn't know we'd be so late. You set still now and don't try to do so much."

"Yes, do so much!" he muttered bitterly to himself.

The old lady hurried into her percale housedress and went out into the kitchen where Eleanor, in a big crisp apron, was already at work, humming as she moved about.

"Can't I do some of that?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, you don't need to help, mother!

I wish you'd sit down in the living-room and make yourself comfy. I thought you looked very tired this afternoon."

"I get kinda drowsy, seems like, listening to folks talk," she said in apology. "Here now—I can cut up them apples, anyway."

"Well—if you *won't* rest." Eleanor gave up the apple dish and the little sharp knife with a pretty smile.

Then she said, carefully impersonal:

"I usually cut them rather fine, mother. For salad, you know. I like them so, don't you? . . . And then if you'll just mix these nuts with them and arrange them, just a spoonful or so each, on these lettuce leaves. . . . Thanks, dear."

The old lady worked with painstaking care. All of Eleanor's things were so nice and she was so particular. The old lady had an uneasy feeling that she never did things to suit Eleanor, although Eleanor was always so sweet, it was hard to tell. But it made her awkward and uncertain—as if she hadn't been keeping house for forty years!

"Father seemed so tired," Eleanor said sympathetically. "I wonder if there's anything I can do for him."

"Oh, no, you don't need to bother with him, he'll sit still," the old lady said hastily.

"I feel guilty about the errands. But he seems so anxious to go."

"He won't give up that he can't walk just the same as he used to. He's always doing himself out."

"Perhaps he'll lie down until dinner."

"Well—he don't like to lie down very well."

She went into the living-room where the old man still sat sunken into the big chair so that only his hands and the wasted bony lines of his profile showed. She stood and looked at him, then she said expressionlessly:

"How do you feel, pa?"

"Feel good enough."

"She thought maybe you'd like to lie down until supper time."

He grunted. Finally he said:

"I tell you I ain't agoing to keep on like this much longer."

She waited.

"I'm either going home or I'm going to hire out somewhere."

"Pshaw, what makes you talk like that? You know you ain't able to do any such thing."

"I know I ain't able—"

"Sh! She'll hear you," she whispered agonizedly. She nodded toward the kitchen. "Come on into the bedroom if you want to talk. Come on, now."

He pulled himself up panting and creaked unwillingly after her.

IV

In the bedroom they sat down together on the modern four-poster and talked in loud, cautious whispers, the old lady glancing anxiously at the door and saying: "Sh! Look out now, pa—"

"Here there ain't a thing to do nor a one to talk to."

"You go down-town every day. You're gone most of the time, seems to me."

"Yes, and what's a few errands down town?"

"You can't do much more at home, can you?"

He glared at her. They kept arguing back and forth, out of principle on the old lady's part, for she sympathized with his anxiety to be at home. She, too, thought "they had been here long enough," "it was time to be getting back." And she sympathized with his disinclination to obey the doctor. She wanted to be back, too, although it was nice to have a change, to be with Harry, and to see how Eleanor did things. She would go back to Golden Prairie with something to talk about for weeks, and with all sorts of new ideas. Already their trunk was half full of little new "rinctums" and housekeeping devices she had purchased in the ten-cent store—cleaning fluids, miraculous soaps, a "mystic mit." But she was getting anxious to be back with her chickens and her plants and her own house. As

for "pa," she thought of what the doctor had said with mingled fatalism and unbelief. She would have thought it foolish to pay too much attention to it. She understood very well how he felt, although of course she would not admit it immediately.

"But it helps you here."

"Helped me a lot, ain't it?"

"Yes, and you know it has. You know what the doctor said yesterday."

"Hmp!"

"Well, he'd oughta know if anyone had, hadn't he? We pay him enough. You know yourself your cough's better. And if you cannot be content to set still—"

"Yes, content to set still! What's the use of living setting still?"

"You couldn't be going around this way at home. You'd set still there because you'd have to."

He turned on her fiercely. "Well, I'm going home. You can stay here if you're so set on it, but I'm going."

"I didn't say I was so set on it."

"Seems like you are the way you keep us here."

"Well, pa, it's for your own good. . . . What did Harry think?"

They kept on wrangling, the old lady composed and unanswerable, the old man fierce, stubborn and inarticulate.

"Well, get off this nice spread," she said at last. "You don't need to rumple it all up."

"You're setting on it, too."

"Yes, but I'm careful how I'm setting. . . . Listen, now! Harry's home. You don't want to have him hear you talking this way with all he's done for you."

He grumbled into miserable silence. Harry called, "Hello, the house!"

They heard Eleanor answer gaily, "Hello!"

"There now, you be quiet," the old lady whispered. "They'll be having supper in a minute."

"I don't want any supper."

"Yes, you do, too, want some supper."

He leaned back, exhausted and pale,

wiping the moisture from his forehead. She watched him inexorably.

"You lie down until then, and then you come in to supper."

She pulled back the spread and he lay down, weary but stubborn and desperate.

"Father! Mother! Coming?" Harry called.

"Yes, we're coming," she answered hastily.

She gave the old man a look and hurried out.

They were already in the dining-room. Harry pulled back her chair and seated her.

"Where's father? Isn't he coming?"

"Oh, yes, he's coming. He'll be here in a minute."

"Perhaps he'd rather not get up for dinner," Eleanor said.

"Oh, yes, of course he'll get up."

"Isn't father so well, mother?"

"He's just resting," she answered evasively. "No, you set still, Harry. I'll call him."

She opened the bedroom door.

"Pa!" she whispered warningly.

"Whadda you want?"

"Come on now. They've all set down to the table. They're all waiting for you."

He dragged himself up and followed her out.

V

At the table the two old people did not show by a look or a gesture what they had been discussing. They were subdued and guarded. Their eyes had a veiled look. They were not easy at their son's table. They were not even easy with Harry any more. There seemed to be no connection between them and him—a pleasant, thin, brown-haired young business man—except his careful, almost worried, attention to them. They had never, since they had first come in the spring, dreamed of intruding even their interests upon him.

The old man ate cautiously, almost furtively. The old lady warned him with a look or a whisper when he was doing anything that she considered

amiss—when he gulped his tea too noisily or reached over too far to spear a piece of bread from the silver dish. He always complained that she wouldn't let him eat and made him go away hungry; and she eked out these unsatisfactory meals with little furtive gifts of apple, bread and cake.

Everything was good, but it was not their kind of food or their way of doing. Things seemed elaborate to them. Eleanor was so nice and cheerful and all, but there did seem to be a little something elaborate about all that she did. They admired her, and had always praised her in Golden Prairie, but they were not themselves with her. She made them uneasy—her broad, cheerful, composed face, her firm, small mouth and chin, her light, modishly waved hair, her pretty, cool, blue eyes, her small, capable hands. She was so competent. They could not think of her as belonging in any way to them. She awed them, and yet they resented her a little.

The old man could not eat much tonight, and after the meal he submitted to going into his room and lying down again. He was in the force of a great resolution. They could feel it. His wife went with him and Harry followed Eleanor into the kitchen.

"Father didn't look very well tonight," he said anxiously.

Eleanor did not answer at once. Then she turned to him with pretty concern showing in her blue eyes and the lines of her broad, creamy forehead.

"I'm so afraid he walked too far today, Harry. He did some little errands for me—but he always seems so anxious to do them. In fact, it was really more for his sake—"

"I know. He misses all the little jobs he's accustomed to doing around the place," Harry said comprehendingly. "I wish there were more things we could give him to do."

"But, Harry, he really isn't able. Dr. Greiner says he must rest. If he would only understand that, somehow—"

"I know." He stood with his hands in his pockets, musing, seeing in his

remembrance what he could not hope to make Eleanor see—the old house, the farm where his brother Jos was now living, and his father as he had been in the old days, a great, tall, strong-shouldered, strong-armed farmer in his blue overalls and boots. "Enos Bush" to everybody, and liked and greeted by the whole town. Of course he was discontented sitting unknown and useless, in an armchair in his son's house, miles from home. Harry's pitiful comprehension dragged against his desire to make the old man stay, to make him be "sensible."

"I guess I'll look in and see how he's making it," he said.

As he went into the living-room he met his mother coming hurriedly out of the bedroom door. He would not give her time to hide the anxious expression of her face, but said:

"How's father feeling, mother?"

"He's all right."

"Is he resting?"

"I guess so."

"Eleanor was afraid he might have walked too far this afternoon."

"He always walks too far. He never knows when he ought to stop."

"I wish we could think of some way to make him more contented, mother," he suggested cannily.

"Yes." Her eyes went guiltily from his face.

"Sit down, mother—"

"I want to go and help with the dishes."

"Never mind the dishes. Eleanor's just stacking them. Her cleaning woman's coming in the morning."

She sat down ill at ease and rocked hard, stealing glances at her son's face and looking as if she wanted to say something. If she had to say it, it was more easily said while they were alone. She began in a thin, expressionless voice:

"Pa thinks we ought to start for home next week, Harry."

"For home!"

She nodded, not looking at him.

"But, mother. That's madness. You know it is."

She acquiesced faintly. The veiled look was over her eyes again, baffling him. She kept on rocking, with tight lips and folded hands. He looked helplessly at her.

"But, mother. We can't let him. You know that. You know what it would mean."

"He's a good deal better," she said.

"Yes, while he's here—"

"Well—that's what he's made up his mind to."

"But you aren't going to give in to him. You're going to help us keep him here."

She kept on rocking.

He gave an exclamation. He had not dreamed that it had really come to this, although he had felt the old man's discontent. Now he got up excitedly. Didn't she know? Couldn't she understand? That if the old man went back he would be going straight to his death! She would not look at him.

He went into the bedroom. His father was sitting, disconsolate but stubborn, on the edge of the bed. The new traveling bag that he had bought to bring out to Denver was open on the rug, and into it he had already put his socks and neckties. Harry stood, troubled and protesting, at the foot of the bed. The old lady came in and sat down in the little mahogany rocker. She had said her say. She sat now silent and non-committal, and let "the men folks" talk.

Harry began lightly and cheerfully: "Look here, father. You don't really think of leaving us."

The old man looked down at his gaunt, knotted hands.

"Why, who would do Eleanor's errands?"

"Oh—I guess what I do don't amount to much."

Harry allowed his trouble to show in his thin, pleasant face and brown eyes.

"Why, father, you can't really think of going. Not when you're doing so well. A few months more and we'll have you well."

The old man's silence goaded him.

"Father, it's madness. It would be

signing your own death warrant. You and mother both know that. You couldn't stand that long, hard winter. In that house 'way at the edge of town—no sidewalks—stoves—"

His father stared gloomily at his big, square-toed shoes planted incongruously on the little round blue-and-white rug. "I've stayed a good while. I ain't much use here," he muttered.

"But, father. What could you do *there?*"

He sat stubborn and dumb. He had no arguments, except the one vital one that he could not put into words—the fierceness, the madness of his longing for home. He wanted the old house, the barn, the trees, the long walk "down-town," the familiar stores, the corn-fields, the ways and the people. He knew what the winter would mean, in a kind of way he knew it. But he had to go.

The old lady rocked silently.

Harry gave an exasperated exclamation. Surely somehow he could make them see, could stop them—but it was like beating against a stone wall. It was like murder to let them go—but what could you do? He suddenly made a gesture and left the room.

He went out to the porch where Eleanor sat rocking softly in one of the low wicker chairs. The very air was different here than in the bedroom which the two old people had somehow filled with an alien atmosphere. This quiet, roomy place, with the pretty chairs, the magazines rustling slightly on the wicker table, the faint fresh scent from the porch boxes—this was home. He dropped down beside Eleanor with a sigh of relief in the midst of his anxiety. She waited, sympathetic but collected, for him to speak.

He told her about it. "I'm afraid he's going for all I can say. He's been away just as long as he can stand it. It's terrible. I can't bear to think of him in that barn of a place. But it's as if he were possessed. It's so foolish, so utterly useless—"

Eleanor was sympathetically silent. She leaned over and picked up some flower petals that had fallen upon the floor and carefully threw them over the rail of the porch.

"But don't you think if you can make him understand—"

"Make him understand! No power on earth can make him understand."

"It's too bad, dear," she said, a little withdrawn. "Perhaps the doctor can persuade him."

"Perhaps."

He could not make her see how utterly bull-headed, how impervious to reason, his father was when he got started. Now he gave it up. He clasped his knee and looked out across the street where a moon of smoked pearl was half veiled by a cloud of dusky violet, above the red-tiled roof of the Italianesque house across the way. He sighed, but settled deeper into his chair and relaxed in the familiar quiet of the porch.

The old man saw the moon, too, as he stood half-dressed by the unlighted bedroom window. It had an alien look above the unfamiliar lines of the Italian roof. Now that he had withstood them all and got his way, a kind of weight of sad wonder lay on his heart. But at sight of the moon a mournful exultation welled up. A few more nights and it would be his own moon again—above the oak tree in the pasture across from the old house at home.



There Was Always Something

By Charles G. Shaw

THERE was always something wrong with Jane.
The day she was born her father became an addict to drugs.
She was always breaking her toys.
At first her mechanical doll would not work.
Later her husband wouldn't.
She was always attempting to explain things,
Yet never really explaining them.
She was never in time for an appointment.
She invariably missed her train
And she was forever stubbing her toe or tripping.

In yesterday's morning paper I read of her death.
The notice was printed in the "Want" column.
There was always something wrong with Jane.



ALL there is to many a match is that the woman kept a straight face when the man told her he was misunderstood.



IF you have a week to win a woman, flatter her. If you have a year, you can begin by abusing her.



A WOMAN is like Broadway. She has her quiet twenties and roaring forties.



The Grand Old Man Intervenes

By Roland Hugins

I

IN great national crises, great men are needed. They do not always appear.

But opportunity comes often to those who are prepared. The greatest opportunity of all came to Benjamin Oakley after several decades crowded with distinguished public services, when his long life was drawing rapidly to its close.

Oakley began his career by embracing and advocating a number of unpopular causes. But that did him no harm in the end. It merely marked him as a man of moral courage, a reputation too little cultivated by politicians and statesmen. At the height of his career he assumed, without effort, the role of popular hero; and in his elder years he was regarded with a degree of affectionate esteem that amounted almost to reverence.

In college Oakley was of the type known as the all-around man, exceptional in that his circle of interests included a segment of curriculum. He rowed in the crew, joined societies, wrote for the university daily, won a prize for public speaking, and withal studied hard enough to receive separate invitations from three professors to continue in graduate work under their direction. These he declined, and on graduation found a place on the staff of one of the radical weeklies.

After a few years his name began to appear in the monthly magazines and quarterly reviews; later on the backs of well-argued but rather fatiguing books. He was known for his striking views on economic and political subjects, but

he did not, at this stage, achieve a wide hearing. He had identified himself with pacifism; he sympathized with the aspirations of Labor; he espoused the initiative, referendum and recall; and he insisted that all incomes should, in some fashion, be earned. Opinions of this color were not then in good repute. At length, at the age of 37, he made something of a popular hit with his book, "The New Liberalism." Then he went into politics. He was congressman for three terms, and senator for two.

Oakley had more qualifications for a successful public career than even his friends at first attributed to him. For one thing, he had a definite program. He knew what he wanted. He was as quick as mere iconoclasts to descry and denounce evils, but he always ran a remedy close on the heels of his criticism; and some of his proposals were original.

Furthermore, he adhered unflinchingly to his principles. He knew the value of time and patience. He could stand upright against opposition and ridicule, and await the swing of the pendulum. As often happens, the radicalisms of his youth became, in his middle age, the accepted and orthodox doctrines of the time. He reaped the full advantage of a victory that comes at the end of a long and stubborn fight. Again, he disclosed qualities of heart and mind that won him genuine respect, for behind an active, alert intelligence he had a kindly and magnanimous understanding of his fellow-men; so that when he became, through successive legislative triumphs, a national figure,

the public found much in him worthy of its admiration.

Perhaps the most helpful single quality that this great leader possessed, or developed, was his knack for effective public speaking. He was not an orator in the usual sense: he was too direct, too nervous, too intimate for the pompous periods of the older school. But he was brilliantly convincing, and he could, on occasion, by a trip-hammer succession of epigrammatic sentences, work his audiences into a fever of enthusiasm.

His sincerity and his energy of conviction communicated themselves. He gestured often and easily, and he had one trick of manner that he used sparingly but with tremendous effect. At the end, or at the climax of a speech, when his hearers were at the flood of their approbation and sympathetic agreement, he would round out a telling phrase and raise both arms straight above his head, with fingers extended, his whole body vibrant. That gesture became famous, a symbol of the great Oakley, and many an audience yelled itself hoarse while he stood with up-lifted arms.

The achievements of Benjamin Oakley during his two terms as President make a pleasant as well as a remarkable page in history. He came near to converting ideals into facts. "Equality of opportunity," "liberty of speech and conscience," "the pursuit of happiness," "government of the people, by the people, for the people"—to these great phrases he gave the substance of reality. He improved the administration of justice, and quickened every function of government. In these years crime and disease showed a large decline. The national wealth advanced by leaps and bounds, and at the same time sound laws diffused prosperity through every class. Idleness, poverty, and discontent disappeared. Ebullient optimists declared that the millennium was dawning. But the clear-sighted Benjamin was not one of these. He knew too well by what narrow margins his triumphs had been won.

For a time after he left the Presidential chair Oakley continued to dominate public life. His influence convoked the convention that addressed itself to the task of revising the Constitution. The delegates were too timid and conservative for Oakley's taste. He wanted the framework of the government thoroughly reconstructed. The debates were protracted and bitter. On critical issues the logic and prestige of Oakley, and his famous gesture, carried the day. In the end his program went through, and was ratified by the States. At a later date he presided over a world conference called to celebrate the reign of Peace, and to consider means of making it perpetual. He told that conference he rejoiced that no part of his reputation rested on war or victory in war.

At the age of 70 years, his work accomplished, at the peak of his popularity, the world in homage at his feet, he retired. He said he wanted to read and to write, avocations for which, he asserted, he had never found enough time. His seclusion was largely respected. On one or two occasions the Grand Old Man was petitioned for advice, and recalled to the public arena to give a decision on some contested point of policy. But for the most part he dwelt in quiet, surrounded by his friends and his grandchildren, living over in reminiscence his golden years.

II

AFTER he left the scene of action, affairs went well, but not so well. The world seemed to become, for no apparent reason, agitated and restless. Possibly these undercurrents of impatience flowed from a surfeit of virtue and quiet. At any rate, there arose a new school of teachers and writers, who chafed under all this complacent tranquillity, and accused the world of having grown dull, drab, soft and cowardly.

This strain caught on. People began to hark back to the good old days of stress and struggle. Adventure, courage, discipline, became words of inspiration

once more. A subtle newness in the temper of the time seemed to be driving men toward change—what change no one knew. For the most part, however, the world traveled its accustomed paths. Institutions were little modified by these currents of thought and feeling, which seemed, indeed, no more than breezes that stirred the leaves but bent no trees.

There came rumors from time to time that the health of Benjamin Oakley was impaired. Really he had suffered nothing except that feebleness which naturally creeps on those who have seen eighty birthdays. His mind dwelt chiefly in the past. Yet he was by no means unaware of what the world did.

For some time there had been irritation in the republic against the Federation of the East. A breach of faith had been charged, in respect to armament, and also to markets and mandates. Protests were sent, and relations were said to be strained. Some public leaders hinted darkly that the East should be taught a lesson. A few of the more intrepid openly urged a crusade.

Matters did not improve. There was a great deal of parading, and carrying of flags, and hot demands for right and justice. Those most adept in reading public opinion were alarmed. They seemed to hear an undertone of menace, a deep, low growl from the populace, as though ancestral emotions had been stirred, and primitive instincts aroused.

Opinions became sharply divided. There were great agitations for war; strenuous agitations against. A popular referendum was at length demanded and proclaimed. The date of balloting was fixed for July 4. Vigorous campaigns were conducted in every community. No discussion within a decade had excited so much interest.

The pro-war advocates had the open support of several eminent politicians and publicists. Superficially the drift seemed to be in their favor. The anti-fight faction redoubled its efforts. It endeavored, again and again, to enlist

the aid of Oakley. Immersed in his dreams of the past, the Grand Old Man hesitated to intervene. But he was the best card that the anti-war partisans could play. They impressed on him the gravity of the situation. At the last moment he consented to speak. A public appearance was arranged for noon of July 2, two days previous to the referendum.

In the great square before the People's Institute a platform thirty feet high had been erected. Oakley flew to the aerodrome outside the city, and motored to the square. All along the route multitudes of men and women cheered him.

In the square twenty thousand people were packed. A great shout greeted the veteran leader as he mounted slowly to the platform. He waved for silence and began to speak. At first his voice was weak and hard to hear; but as he went on his tones gathered volume, and the voice-amplifiers carried his words to every corner of the square.

Oakley delivered the following speech:

"My Fellow Citizens: Since history dawned no lifetime has drawn to a close without spanning a war or several wars. Each generation longs to see war with its own eyes. It yearns, unconsciously in part, to strut across the stage in a garb that it fancies heroic. The first generation to resist that ancient temptation will be the first generation to prove itself civilized. You, I am sure, are that generation.

"Only we who are old among you can remember those gales of tribal hate and collective blood-lust called war. In the retrospect of history war sometimes looks beautiful, like a jungle pool seen at a distance. In reality it is obscene. During war men and women shed the centuries as a blighted flower sheds its petals. They become savages again, without scruple and without mercy. They are gullible, intolerant, treacherous, cruel.

"War is always irrational. After it starts, its causes are forgotten: retaliation is a sufficient motive. Nations organize themselves for the business of

mass-murder, heedless of their own destruction if only in the process they can destroy.

"The disputes that swing open the gates of armed conflict can always be adjusted by a modicum of fairness and good sense. But in the past man has not used his reasoning faculties. He has preferred to use his claws. In your time and mine those claws are sharpened with a thousand mechanical contrivances, and saturated with deadly chemical poisons. Science has made war the suicide of the race.

"You who are yet young do not realize what war actually means. I, who am old, know; and I beseech you to remain ignorant. Be the first to shake off earth's immemorial curse. Cast your ballots against this unthinkable crime, this incredible folly. Refuse to be deceived by those who would have you, in the pursuit of illusory gains, waste your wealth and plunge your children into debt. Turn a deaf ear to those who slander your courage and attempt to gloss the baseness and sordidness of war with cant about the hardy virtues. Spurn those who want you to hate and kill, and who urge you, in the name of justice, to spill the blood of innocent thousands. Do not shamle back into apehood! Walk upright like men, and let God see, at last, some reflection of His own image!"

As he finished, the old man raised his quivering arms straight above his head, and stood silhouetted in the strong, white sunlight. At the sight of that well-remembered gesture, the vast throng broke into a rocking, tumultuous cheer, which rose in wave above

wave of crashing sound, and did not abate for many minutes. Only a few were silent, and they stood with streaming eyes.

III

THAT night and the next morning the speech was read by millions. It was printed on the first page of every newspaper, posted on every sky-board, flashed across every screen. The motion pictures of Oakley delivering his address were transmitted at once by radiograph to each city and hamlet. When the last high gesture came into view, the crowds everywhere were deafening in their applause.

Two days after Oakley's dramatic appearance, the nation-wide referendum was held. The Grand Old Man again came up to town to cast his ballot. His purpose sustained him until he had left the polls; and then came the end. He collapsed as he re-entered his machine, and died within the hour. He died happy in the belief that he had averted a world catastrophe.

The news of his death was received everywhere with sorrow and distress. But public attention was soon diverted by the exciting events which crowded the succeeding days. The referendum showed an overwhelming majority in favor of hostilities. Approximately eighty-two per cent of the people had voted for war. It was found, providentially, that the War Department had already secretly mobilized the reserves. By nightfall of the day after the declaration of war, the first troop trains began to roll into the terminals of the Western ports.



THE average man's effort at immortality consists in scratching his name on porch chairs, trees, and church walls.

Irony

By Jay Jarrod

THE author had been called upon to make his curtain speech, for the play was a tremendous success and hailed as the hit of the season.

Stepping before the footlights, he beamed benignly upon the audience, then suddenly collapsed and was carried off by two scene shifters.

For sitting in the second row was the man from whom he had stolen the play. The fellow was asleep.



Early Love

By Harold Vinal

DAPHNE was a pine tree
On a lone hill,
Lesbia as slender
As a daffodil.

Rose was a sunny garden
Blown into bloom,
Cleo a candle
In a dark room.

They were beautiful,
You were sad—
But you gave me all
The dreams I had.



Baggage

By Jennie Franklin Purvin

I SAW Peter Dunno,
Lying head foremost
On a baggage truck
In the dismal railroad station at Troy,
Waiting, in a sealed pine box
Covered with an American flag,
To take the train
For some unnamable town in Vermont.
Just baggage,
Addressed to Mrs. Andrew Dunno.

Mrs. Andrew Dunno,
Sitting, perhaps, at this moment
Behind the drawn curtains
In the darkened parlor
Which she has prepared for this home-coming.

Three years ago, the tag on the pine box shows,
He left here.
Three years on French soil
(Most of the time in it);
And now dug out to see the light of day.

For what?
That he may hear he died in vain?
That naught has come of his last sacrifice?
That men still fight—and still must fight—
And die again?

Or just to satisfy a mother's broken heart?



The Nietzschean Follies

I

The Rural Soul

By Thomas Beer

I

TWENTY years ago, when Sunday supplements had begun the pollution of my intelligence, there was a spasm of journalized science which upset and distressed me. Some native wizard had uncovered strata in Montana or elsewhere which would feed the world. The mud had all the necessary qualities. I recall a caption of "Three Pills a Day" and sketches of a neat factory disgorging capsules. The children of earth were to be fed directly from their mother's bosom; groceries and dairies would cease; one turned a crank and crammed a dozen nutritive qualities into a glycerine cover. Joy and digestion would reign and the dining-room table would vanish.

It was that sort of tosh. I took it in the spirit of pure faith and was alarmed for the six or seven farmers whose land lay visible from my grandfather's veranda in central Ohio. I was peculiarly afflicted for a certain Schintzelein. He had charming lithographed views of Hell in his parlor and his wife made cakes full of aniseed. Well, he survives and nothing came of the nonsense. It offers, though, the plot of a novel in the Wells-Flammarion tradition. Imagine the rustics of America embattled upholding mutton and cauliflower as righteous diet against this chemical bolus, wild cattle plunging through the streets of Chicago, an orgy of meat-

eaters in a deserted restaurant, the farmer *contra mundum*.

This forgotten excitement recovered itself somewhere and woke in my brain lately when a cattle breeder savagely flung a challenge into some Midland impapyrate row. Suppose the farmers stopped farming? Then, what would the capitalists and other oppressors do? An editor jauntily answered with the aforetime wizard's prophecy. Science would feed the world, somehow, and the farmer could go to the devil, taking his crops and complaints along with him. Pricked on by jaundice or another splenetic ailment, he chose to add that the farmer, coolly considered, was a nuisance and a deterrent to the advance of culture. The outbreak interested me by its quantum of chill truth. The farmer, as he exists, is a nuisance. Something should be done about it. Nothing can be. But he should be listed together with bad novels, government, Cyprian maladies and the other irritations not yet erased from the slovenly progress of organic evolution.

He is, of course, a coward. He usually knows this and sometimes admits it. His posture is that of the small boy who has fluked a first attempt at tennis and stands bouncing a ball against a fence, insisting that he's found a superior sport. In philosophical patter, he enriches an inferior employment by a set of suitable assertions. In plain English, he brags of a simple feat in self-

defense. The kid goes back to tennis, presently. The farmer sticks to his mire because, firstly, it is profitable, and secondly, because generations of poets, statesmen and like liars have smeared the business in saccharine. He sits horribly impregnable in a fortress of misplaced adjectives taunting the world with his nobility, disinterest and sacrifice. Meanwhile, he knows his lifework is puerile, envies the rest of us and frequently loathes himself with such vigor that he flies to spend his old age in turmoil and blawdry, in Los Angeles, Paris and Palm Beach. This passes as earned repose. It is nothing but escape.

His cowardice makes him the prey of words, as every skilled evangelist knows. The hound of heaven howls waverers up to repentance and profession in sentences without meaning. They wobble, unwilling to resign anything prohibited after the Sixth Commandment. They stagger in a mist of vowels, lurch forward into a pool and wake respectable, drenched, deprived of women, home brew, dice and the subtler pleasures of malice. Having got into the mess, they either drag others down or become hypocrites by habit. The latter is the easier, more general course.

Having much observed it, I decline any tittle of credence as to the solid nature of rural religious feeling. An accident once offered me the whole show in a compact apotheosis.

It happened in Arkansas. Returning from the races at Hot Springs, with other sinners, our driver followed the wrong road and we landed in the middle of a revival. It was an effect for George Bellows, for Daumier, for Hogarth. The revivalist was about his task under a canopy still lettered with the title of some decayed circus. Oil flared and stunk and lit up an epicycle of persimmon trees which took on an unhallowed seeming of painted tin. Bored children lay asleep against the edge of the light. Lank women cooked food over subdued fires and gossiped, studying skirts sidelong. Knots drifted toward the howling apostle, now and then, and sometimes one caught the

infection, plunged on to grace and came back redeemed for a fried chicken leg.

Meantime, the circumference was curiously alive. Under the persimmons, comfortably remote from God's spokesman, bottles were glittering. There was talk of orange pop mixed with alcohol as substitute for legitimate red licker. Soldiers had strayed over from Camp Pike and mixed hopefully with the herd. Eyes shimmered under incredible female hats. Incredible jests were tossed and fell fruitfully among adolescents gathered in the name of virtue. Arrangements were made with incredible speed. Couples moved off and were, I am glad to say, lost in the shadows. It was most instructive. I explained to my companion, a French captain, that this was a religious assembly. He seemed surprised.

II

RURAL virtue is and, I suspect, always has been a farce. Seated at the kitchen range of my battery in Texas, I noted that when the brawny lads of the corn-belt took a jolt of lemon extract and started individual sagas, the urban recruits fell into awed, envious silence. Amazement took the fauns and satyrs collected from Broadway, Clark Street and Euclid Avenue. Rather later, when wronged women presented themselves at my adjutant's desk in a Division Headquarters, I found a backing for the recitals. The reasons why Private Olsen or Corporal Cooper should directly marry the affiant so often included mention of wheatfields, hickory groves and corncribs that I haven't been able to pass such bits of scenery since without an uneasy blush. And, in France, censoring letters, I never wondered when the men wrote to younger brothers in Missouri that Gascony was a dull, prim and resourceless territory.

Virtue, in American terms, is mostly a theory of continence. I take it that the farmer is the least continent of men, married or single. He is candidly avaricious and glories in the fact. The *Unpopular Review* once pointed out that the percentage of crime in farm-

ing districts is much greater than in cities, in proportion. Why can't an act of Congress or a straw vote compel the rustic to come down and be human? I weary of his purity.

The difficulty is with the women. I fancy that women have a larger fondness for the lies they tell, although they never come to believe them as men do. So much of their early life is passed in dissimulation that they settle, after marriage, into sheer artistry. The farmwife has an awful job, anyhow. She must convince her children that their lot is desirable when she knows that they know it isn't. She must preach the virtues of their father, when his brats communing with other brats at swimming-holes and behind henhouses know him for a hollow fraud. She must bolster the conceit of her sons by assuring them that it is a noble and intricate task to heave manure about, to plow, to milk when, at the age of ten, they've learned to do these things competently without any expense in thought. So she wants the pay of her slavery, the satisfaction of seeing her perjuries revered and applauded, the joy of contemning metro-poles, the right to brag.

Thus, the journal which withdrew reports of a current and jolly action in divorce from its rural edition had to put them back forthwith. The women of the raisin pie belt rose shrieking against the deprivation. They would hear of Mrs. X, her raiment, the putative bastardy of her baby or they would take another paper. Thus the movie makers circulate legends of life among the wicked rich, cabarets without roofing, dinner parties where naked wenches rise through fountains of champagne, frustrated rapes in impossible boudoirs, virgins shedding their tinseled robes and staggering home to the farm and the embraces of their mothers, country lads foiling the vile city boss. Indeed, if anyone has fully gauged the cynicism of the farmer female, it is the movie king.

Cynical she is. And on that quality proceeds much of the political debauchery of the midlands. Having no

trust in the men around her, she develops an inner necessity, not at all obscure. There must be, somewhere, a model man. If he appears, she worships him and usually forces him on her male associates by mere weight of lip service. Take the case of Bryan. Spellbinders and pressmen have represented his first beginnings as a triumph. It is supposed that he moved from County Fair to High School Commencements spilling words and always, everywhere, capturing suffrage.

It isn't so. He operated in a region where enough of the sane animalism of the frontier lingered to make his path pebbly. The men chuckled a great deal. The women, though, marked him for a hero. He had charms—a coarse, severe, but indubitable beauty, the terrific masculine promise of his percussive baritone, comprehensible dress. He was good, pure, averse to liquor and cards and things like that. He addressed the women of his audiences with flatteries that would choke a Nilotic dragoman. Lads grew to voting age in the perfume of his name, sighed by their mothers, aunts and sisters. In 1896 all this musky seething came to fearful flower. If he hadn't grown old and plump . . . but that is by the way.

Formerly starved for the moulded jellies of Art, the farmwife is now supplied. The movies cater to her. She has magazines vowed to her ideals in *belles lettres*, in portraiture, in philosophy. This has worked a reverse. Our tradition is that Mother begs the pence for Ella's music lessons, bullies the funds out of Father for Edwin's year on Montmartre, copies Stanley's M.S. I have strictly examined a dozen young talents on the point and find that, in every case, it was the old man who supplied the final shekels necessary to the flight of genius. Mamma was the reluctant figure in the tale. The over-alled parent was willing. Mother wanted them safe at home. Was there not a phono-cabinet stocked with Caruso's records and jazz? Wasn't there a bookshelf? Hadn't Sally's bedroom chintz curtains just like those in the

most authentic movies? Well, why mix with the painted mob that creates these toys?

Alas, poor brood mare! Perhaps it is, after all, only the stallions that understand the lure of that iridescent fallow where the Muses cavort with the colts and fillies. There is, of course, a baser admixture of envy in the pain. There is always the high dread. The Medusa will freeze a circle in their eyes. Returning, they will not see her as they did. At the end they will pity a trifle and she will know that last, least supportable misery. Why wonder that she tries to credit Heaven?

At the end, she is most piteous, and her man with her. They have given their days to a vain thing, a double dance before a tarnished mirror. He has passed his life in cruelty to a soil which gave without argument. He has been a butt. She has stayed his manhood with her sympathy and toils. And then? A final simulation of arrogance, neurotic hectorings of hired folk or a helpless, degraded sweetness and humility. They sit and stare. One hopes, after the long sweat, they seldom clearly see. Their portion was with the beasts. Their own hands kept them so.



A PHILOSOPHER is a man in whom the tragedy of life excites pity for humanity but not terror for himself. Before he feels pity, he is too superficial to be a philosopher; after he feels terror, he is too religious.



BEAUTIFUL thought: God must have loved the common people, because he made so many of them. Sad corollary: God must have hated righteous people, because he made so few of them.



THE Aims of Art in Nordic Civilization: (1) America—a place where actors become millionaires. (2) England—a place where actors become knights. (3) France, Germany, etc.—places where actors spend their spare time learning English.



The Press and the Drama

By George Jean Nathan

I

AN attempt to decipher the precise standpoint from which the gentlemen on the New York newspapers criticize the drama presents a rich perplexity. It is commonly, and often correctly, believed that the newspaper reviewer is instructed to criticize the drama from the standpoint of that vague soul known now as the average man and now as the man in the street; but a study of the New York critical compositions leads one to doubt that, if this is the case, the reviewing gentlemen are obeying orders. For surely the average man or the man in the street regards "East Is West" and "The Man Who Came Back" and even "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife" with all the enthusiasm that the journalistic reviewer fails to. But if the newspaper reviewer does not view drama with the eyes of the average man, does he view it with the eyes of the sophisticated and cultured man? Again one studies his compositions, and again one is baffled. For if he viewed drama from this more reserved and civilized seat he could not possibly see the virtues in such inferior plays as "The Detour" and "Daddy's Gone A-Hunting" that he fails to see in such work as "Papa" and "The Gentile Wife" and, above all, in "The Children's Tragedy." Well, then, if he does not take either of these positions in his surveys, what position does he take? It is commonly believed that he appraises drama with the mind of the simon-pure, undiluted numskull, but—though one is sometimes sorely tempted by the facts in such instances as "Swords" to believe it—one also finds that this is not the

case. For, if it were, he would succumb to such things as "Tarzan of the Apes" and "Oh Marion" in a fashion that he happily does not. But if he does not criticize drama as an average man, or as a cultured man, or as a complete mooncalf, as what does he criticize it? Contrary to my customary and often highly irritating practice of having a facile solution for everything under the sun, I give it up.

But though I am unable to solve the rebus, I privilege myself a guess or two. The newspaper reviewer, as I inspect him, strikes me as viewing drama with the blanket journalistic eye of his managing editor. This latter eye is one excessively practical yet excessively eager not to seem too practical: a mixture of commerce and timorous, prudent idealism. And the reviewer feels the glare of this managing editorial eye, however thick the wall that separates the two offices. The typical New York managing editor is a suave and eely fellow profoundly gifted with a talent for sitting simultaneously on the cashier and art supplement stools without falling between them. He is able figuratively to take a drink with one comradely arm around Senator Reynolds and the other around Sir Joshua, permitting neither of them to be aware of other's presence. He can genially bounce Rubens on one knee and Reubens, the delicatessen merchant, on the other at one and the same time. On one and the same page he can—or at least hopes and prays he can—tickle Gimbel, Henry Cabot Lodge, Johann Sebastian Bach, George Bickel, General Foch, Lloyd George, the Japs, Rodin, and Stern Brothers. And in order to mask his encompassing and pros-

perous conciliatory nature, and by way of not letting all of the cat out of the bag, he occasionally fetches up a few alibis for himself in the obscure persons of a Yiddish sweatshop operator whose doors are found to have been bolted when the fire broke out, George Sylvester Viereck, Butler Dayenport, John Roach Straton, or some Third Avenue manufacturer of evil frankfurters.

The successful newspaper, the managing editor appreciates, must please a preponderant majority of its readers and this preponderant majority, he also fully appreciates, is of the stout belief that art, while commendable in a dubious way and even perhaps not entirely reprehensible (like the exploits of an heroic German ace, for example), is yet a poor witness for the defence. In order to get this majority to swallow dramatic art at all, it is necessary, he knows, to coat it with a deceptive critical sugar coating made up of allusions to spaghetti, quotations from Rudyard Kipling's worst poems, references to the A. E. F. and the long cigars that John Stetson used to smoke, jokes about the suit worn by the juvenile, bad puns, and observations to the effect that the child (phonetically spelled) is in the British capital. The play reviewer presently catches this critical measles and remains permanently ill with the ailment; and as time goes on his compositions become progressively more measles and less criticism. The result is a contemplation of drama that is infinitely less a contemplation of drama as art than a sedulous and ingenious avoidance of contemplation of drama as art—in other words, a straddling of the question. A glance at almost any New York newspaper for a week running will indicate clearly to what extent this straddling goes. Drama is criticized in terms of the Algonquin Hotel, the Polo Grounds, the Actors' Equity Ball or, by the older fellows, in terms of the United Missionaries Society, the free lunch that used to be served in Augustin Daly's greenroom, or Madame Janaschek's emotional equipment, but never in terms of æsthetics. The only time drama is ever considered

in the newspapers as an art is when something is produced in the Neighbourhood Playhouse down in Grand Street, which is far enough away not to bother anyone. But as a general rule the view, in Frank Lord's old phrase, is of "the drama and other sports."

In the case of the plays of Eugene O'Neill one gets a particularly clear idea of the manner in which this metropolitan journalistic criticism cavorts. Surely if any playwright in America deserves, or has ever deserved, to be considered as a dignified artist, it must be agreed that O'Neill is that man. Yet, save in two cases, he is regularly treated not as an artist-dramatist but exactly as if he were a mere box-office jobber like Avery Hopwood or Roi Cooper Meigrue, and his plays not as works of artistic merit or demerit but as so many vaudeville jugglers or trained dogs. He is subjected not to the standards of æsthetics, but to those of the popular drama. He is criticized not as a sincere and honest writer, whether good or bad, but as a fabricator of showshop stuffs. They deplore that, unlike the vastly more agreeable and sunshiny Winchell Smith and Edward Childs Carpenter, he seems to see human life chiefly as an inscrutable and gloomy piece of irony on the part of the gods—like Joseph Conrad and Fëdor Dostoievski. They lament that his themes (unlike George V. Hobart's) are drab and sordid—like Zola's and Andreyev's. They deny (and offer the works of Augustus Thomas in proof) that life as O'Neill pictures it is just that way. And when, as in the case of "Anna Christie," he does not see life "that way," but sees it with a touch of rainbow athwart its skies, they recall his past work and snicker self-satisfiedly that he has arbitrarily stuck a theatrical happy ending onto his play. In them the poison of the showshop has worked so long that it is simply impossible for them to consider him as an autonomous artist and not as a theatrical offspring of some couple like Eugene Walter and Rida Johnson Young. And when they bravely seek to save their faces by straddling the question, the

result is no less a circus. Criticism may straddle nothing. Positive or not positive, certain or doubtful, enthusiastic or disgusted, it must lead by the head or pull by the tail. The American journalistic criticism has in the main absurdly tried to handle O'Neill by sitting half in the saddle and half in the buggy.

Two new O'Neill plays have been produced within the past month or so: the "Anna Christie" to which I have referred, and "The Straw." The latter is the better work, an uncommonly forceful, remarkably eloquent and very shrewdly devised study of the fears and hopes of two tuberculosis victims. Its local revelation was unfortunately couched in such incompetent acting and directing terms that the values of the manuscript went largely for naught. Miss Margalo Gillmore's performance of the important leading rôle needed the directing hand of a Henry Miller very, very badly—without Miller, she seems lost. And Otto Kruger's performance in the opposite rôle, while much, much better, still left a great deal to be desired.

Under the hand of Arthur Hopkins, "Anna Christie" fared much better. While it is true that the leit-motif of the play, the greed of the sea for its people, seemed somehow to elude the director's baton, the projection of the manuscript was otherwise all that George C. Tyler missed in the case of "The Straw." It seems to me that Hopkins understressed the fundamental melodrama of the play unduly (this will doubtless curtail its chances of financial success), but his direction of the actors was excellent. Miss Pauline Lord was admirable as the harlot daughter of the old sea dog, and Frank Shannon and George Marion were thoroughly in the picture of the manuscript. Hopkins, with this play, adds another to his list of important contributions to the American theatre. The play is O'Neill at his second best, true,—it is, in essence, a mere Edward Sheldon play written by a greatly superior dramatist—but O'Neill's second best is far beyond the talents of any

other person writing for our stage at the present time.

II

THE intellectual and emotional maturity of a dramatist is to be determined by the age at which he writes his Christ play. Almost every writer for the theatre does a play about Christ some time in his life. Usually it is his first play, conceived while he is still in college and written either for the college literary paper or, soon after his graduation, for the Little Theatre of his home town. With such eternal undergraduates as Charles Rann Kennedy and his like, it comes much later in life, generally around the age of forty-eight or fifty. The Christ play seems to have a curious appeal to young men in their early twenties and old dramatic hacks. This is perhaps because, of all themes, the Christ theme is the easiest to handle. It is almost impossible to fail with it. The effect—registered for almost two thousand years—is ready-made for the playwright; the hush and thrill for which a writer with another theme has to sweat and struggle is here full-fledged and intact before he sets pen to paper. All that he has to do is to darken his stage, bring on a bad actor in a white night-shirt and coincidentally bring up the lights again—and the house is impressed as a score of Shaws and Synges could never impress it. Upon the printed page the Christ play makes no less an impression. Unlike any other piece of work, however bad it is, it wins attention and is promptly announced to be "reverent" or is violently denounced as in poor taste and blasphemous, the latter generally by the Jewish readers.

The Christ play usually follows one of four trends. In the first, the scene is a barn in Ohio whither come three men, the one a poet, the second a political economist and the third a trombone player in a jazz cabaret. They enter the barn and find that an outcast woman has just had a baby. The light from the single lantern in the barn casts a peculiar glow over the child. There is a

strange silence about the place. The poet looks at the trombone player. "Do you know what night this is?" he asks the latter hoarsely. "Why—why—it is Christmas Eve!" responds the trombone player.

In the second version, the scene is a household of narrow, jealous, backbiting men and women. To the household comes a man dressed in an Inverness coat. He speaks pianissimo and when he learns that Delia, the servant girl, has been seduced by the jackanapes, Hugo, defends her against those who would cast her out into the stormy night. This act exercises a profound influence on the members of the household. "What is your name; who are you?" they ask in hushed tones of the stranger. "I am—" he begins. There is a peal of thunder. "I am—" he begins again. There is a flash of lightning. "I am—" he begins a third time. There is a sound of church chimes. The other characters look significantly from one to another. There is a tense silence. The curtain falls.

In the third version, the figure of Christ does not appear in the flesh. The scene is a gay wine party on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The supers are dressed like the Russian ballet; there is much hoochie-coochie dancing; two Swobodas engage in a wrestling match; an actress got up to look like Theda Bara lies on a red couch at left with an actor got up to look like Macbeth and kisses him *appassionato* at frequent intervals, the while two big coons from the "Shuffle Along" company fan them with long palms; three of the union musicians from the house orchestra who have been sneaked up during the foregoing scene and have been dressed like mandarins sit cross-legged on the floor in a far corner and play the arghool, the dremla and a kettle-drum; a fat actor supposed to be very drunk lopes around the stage smirking lasciviously at the girls; somebody periodically strikes a pair of cymbals; a large pot of Japanese punk burns at either side of the proscenium; a sou-brette in strip tights with a tinsel diaper around her middle and a tin

Sterno can on each of her breasts hotly embraces a tall actor made up to look like Marc Antony at the top of the flight of steps up stage and, with their arms locked around each other, they roll down the stairs together; and a tenor from the old and defunct Wilbur Opera Co., dressed in yellow pajamas with green cuckoos embroidered on them, and representing a eunuch, passes drolly among the troupe with a tray of silver goblets. Suddenly there is a pause. The emotional actress, in the costume of Clytemnestra, enters slow-paced with bowed head. There is ribald mirth at her expense. She raises her head, looks long and straight at the critic for the *Staats-Zeitung*, and lifts her hand for silence. A queer look comes over the assemblage. "What is it? What is it, Obediloch? What hast befallen thee, erst our queen of Love?" they bid. And, looking still long and straight at the critic for the *Staats*, and with a tri-facial neuralgic expression, the emotional actress breathes, "I have seen him—the Nazarene!"

In the fourth version, there are either a couple of old lions from the Sells-Floto circus or a chariot race.

What Mr. E. Temple Thurston's Christ play, "The Wandering Jew," needs is, if not a chariot race, at least the lions. For as it stands it is a monotonous and anything but imaginative recasting of the familiar legend of the Jew who scoffed at the Saviour on His way up Calvary and who suffered the curse of a heart and foot-sore peregrination until the second coming. Thurston retells the story of Matthew Paris, Lenau, Croly, Sue and numerous others with little eloquence save such as reposes in the stock theatre tricks of sudden high lighting to suggest the Holy Presence, repetitions of the Schiller "Maid of Orleans" window-gazing device of describing stirring scenes supposed to be transpiring off stage, and Melbourne McDowell cabotinage. The scenery is at all times superior to the text. The presentation is designed to capture the fancy of that largely hypothetical portion of the public that is sup-

posed to stay away from the theatre until the backdrop is painted up to look like the South Sea Island set in the second act of "The Scandals of 1921" and is designated on the program as Palestine. The million dollars made by "Ben Hur" still sticks in the minds of the managers. They believe that "Ben Hur" made the million because of its religious atmosphere. They forget that for one religious "Ben Hur" there have been a far greater proportion of "Old Homesteads," "Way Down East" and Ziegfeld Follies that have made almost as much money. The leading rôle in "The Wandering Jew" is in the hands of Mr. Tyrone Power. I use the word hands advisedly.

III

WHILE "The Grand Duke" is not one of Sacha Guitry's first-line comedies, it contains so much that is typically Guitry that it provides a far better theatre evening than the American theatre is accustomed to. Although it hasn't the wit of "The Illusionist," or the full humour of "Wife, Husband and Lover," or the observation of "Father Was Right," it has at least two scenes that are as good as anything that the extraordinarily versatile Parisian playboy has done; and these two scenes are alone worth all of the native-made comedies that a local season discovers. The first of these scenes is that between the Russian and his mistress of twenty years before—a scene of deft humour and pretty reminiscence with an essence of the likable heart-ache that Schnitzler so well distils. The other is the breakfast table scene in the last act, a device which Guitry handles as amusingly as the dexterously manœuvred scene in the second act of his "Night Watchman" or the Cohanesque episode that closes his "I Love You." While the Italian pun, "Traduttore, traditore," (translator, traitor) does not strictly apply to the transposition of the French text, there is present a hardness and, occasionally, a stark literality that diminish the sauce of the original—this especially in the

scene between the two young lovers in Act II. Further, Mr. Lionel Atwill, a good actor, is by Anglo-Saxon nature and temperament unsuited to the leading rôle. He plays the Slav aristocrat—corners of the mouth pulled down, carriage excessively erect, stoic grunts, and all—much as Walker Whiteside played "Mr. Wu." Mr. John Shine plays the bourgeois French father in the terms of Jess Dandy's Prince of Pilsen; and the young actor cast for the illegitimate son (which Guitry *fits* himself played in Paris), what with his champing and running about, has apparently been directed less as an actor than as a member of a track team. Miss Lina Abarbanel and Miss Vivian Tobin are the best of the company.

But with all its defects, the comedy is gladly recommended to your attention. It is suavely sophisticated; it will give you a dozen or more wide internal grins; and it marks still another step forward in David Belasco's judgment of reputable manuscripts. This Belasco appears to have turned aside from his protracted sponsorship of pseudopsychological and scientific sideshows, three dollar dime novels, and ghosts with the Hamlet left out, to plays worth a civilized ear. In addition, he has happily abandoned his Murray's Pompeiian Room stage investiture for something more simple and tasteful and beautiful. If he continues, who knows but that in time he will deserve at least a measure of the status as an artistic producer that has, in the past, so vociferously—and faultily—been accorded to him?

IV

THE trouble with "The Intimate Strangers" is that Booth Tarkington is not an Irishman. No one but an Irishman—save it be Barrie—seems able to take so fragile a central idea and make a three act play out of it. Where a George Birmingham can build an excellent three act play out of a statue to a mythical general or a Lennox Robinson a captivating three act comedy out of the tantrum of a mama's boy—or a Barrie

a rare satire out of an unopened window in a railway coach—Tarkington has been able to make out of the question of a woman's age less a sound three act play than an engaging dialogue "in one" arbitrarily played with three full-stage sets. This dialogue is often thoroughly amusing—some of it touches a pretty high dramatic quality—but there is no play, or at least very little of a play, behind it. And the result is a periodically engaging but consistently intransitive theatrical product. It is true that the central idea of the same author's "Clarence" was not so very much more able-bodied, but in the instance of that admirable comedy Tarkington's power of characterization was brought to the rescue at every other turn of the intrinsically feeble fable. The characterizations in the case of "The Intimate Strangers" are, save in the single instance of the young boy—a fine piece of work—negligible. Miss Billie Burke is a very attractive heroine—altogether too attractive, one fears, within the intention of the text. Glenn Hunter is superb as the young boy: I have rarely seen a better performance. Alfred Lunt, as the lover, walks like Bert Williams and talks like Ralph Herz.

V

MR. GEORGE SCARBOROUGH'S latest bad play, "The Mad Dog," is an excessively passionate confection wherein a ten-twenty-thirty Stephen Ghent ravishes a ten-twenty-thirty Ruth Jordan, is duly spiritualized by Cupid, and ends up shaved, pure and married. In essence a revamping of the materials of "The Great Divide," it deletes from Moody's play every trace of imagination and writing ability, with the result that what remains is a perfectly obvious and profoundly dull piece of theatrical goods. I have now seen my seventh (or is it eighth?) Scarborough opus—and my last. I decline any further invitation to review his works, and herewith make public and formal affirmation of the fact. Not once in any of the plays of his which I have sat before has he produced a single thought, a single written

line, a single bit of fancy or even a single merely ingenious theatrical situation worth my time and attention. The Messrs. Shubert may go on producing his plays if they care to, but the next time they do so I request the affable Mons. Greneker to send me tickets to Al Jolson instead. I am now forty years old, and a man of forty deserves a good time once in a while, even if he is a dramatic critic.

Mr. Conway Tearle, late of the cinema and the seducer of the exhibit, gave a performance of the every-move-a-picture variety. The talented Miss Helen Menken had the rôle of the rapée, and further damaged her career by appearing in still another meritless play. These competent young actresses have so little judgment. They fail to realize that nothing so greatly ruins their futures as trashy writing. There is only one actress in America who has in later years achieved position in hack plays, and for one such we have the record of no less than fourteen skilful but misguided women who have been—or are on the way to be—relegated to undeserved oblivion.

VI

It is possible that I discriminate unjustly in the case of Mr. Scarborough. For, the night after I saw his "Mad Dog" I saw the Hattons' latest, "We Girls." And a night or two after I saw the Hattons' "We Girls," I saw Samuel Shipman's latest, "Nature's Nobleman." Surely the Hattons and M. Shipman have wasted just as much of my amiable time as Mr. Scarborough, and should go into the dump with him. In none of their many attempts at dramatic writing have they revealed anything save a more or less inferior grade of vaudeville sketch skill. Quality has been a stranger to them, and imagination a stranger no less.

The Hatton masterpiece named is a vulgar rehash of the old theme of the daughter who returns home to find a mother given to peccadillos of one sort or another, and who sets herself to the task of reforming the latter. The ex-

hibit is full of the authors' peculiar fondness for such pathological phraseology as "you handsome brute of a man," "that great splendid brute" and the like, and of their equal fondness for what passes for "smart" atmosphere and worldly sophistication.

The first five minutes of "Nature's Nobleman" (written by Mr. Shipman in collaboration with Miss Clara Lipman) present a revamping of the old joke, "That's not a lady; that's my wife," a revamping of the equally aged *mot* on the badness of a proffered cigar, and the scene wherein a wife looks over her husband's shoulder at the card table and gives away the hand that he is holding. What follows pursues much the same course. From first to last, the thing is unbelievably trite and amateurish. The scene is laid in the Catskill Mountains, and atmosphere is obtained by causing the stagehands periodically to blow on bird whistles and ring cow-bells. The words accompanying this pastoral symphony concern the effort of a dialect hotel-keeper to straighten out the tangles in his guests' and own family's lives. This rôle is played by Mr. Louis Mann in his familiar manner. Mr. Mann has acted in more bad plays during the last ten years than any six other actors combined. He seems to have a particular affection for such plays. He acts the present one, indeed, with all the intense sincerity and passion of a Novelli playing a classic. It is very amusing.

VII

"THE MAN'S NAME," by Eugene Walter and Marjorie Chase, and "The Great Broxopp," by A. A. Milne, opened on the same night. On the night before, I happened to pass the Republic Theatre, where the former was scheduled for presentation, and beheld, upon the façade of the building, a large picture showing a noble actor with his shirt open at the neck and with a fierce expression on his face pointing a revolver at another actor with a villainous black moustache. So I decided to review "The Great Broxopp."

Of Milne I have often written in the past, and this new play fails to persuade me to change my estimate of him. The comic virtues which my colleagues profess to find in him elude me. All that I can see in his plays is a polite effort at subtlety and wit that somehow does not come off. Place Milne beside Miss Clare Kummer and you get an automatic criticism of him. He tries to do much the same sort of thing as Miss Kummer, and does not succeed. He is not without ideas, and his satiric intent is clear, but his dramatic skill is not sufficient to give those ideas life, nor that satiric intent body. He has undeniably what is called taste; and it seems to me that his friends confound this taste with talent.

VIII

FAULT-FINDING grows excessively tiresome. So, before coming to Miss Rachel Crothers' "Everyday," let us set down the inspiring news that the new Ziegfeld "Midnight Frolic" provides all of the comparatively civilized pastime that the Scarborough-Hatton-Shipman profundities fail to. The nature of this pastime I need not go into at this late day. I have described it for you often enough in the past. In a recent number of a theatrical weekly, in a series called "Mirrors of Broadway," there is this note, among others, in the course of an exposé of me: "He declares Ziegfeld a genius. Now that the Roof has a soda fountain instead of a bar, we may expect the truth." If Ziegfeld is not a genius, he is at least the best producer of music shows that the world theatre has known.

Footnote: I had a flask with me.

IX

MISS CROTHERS' "Everyday" is just as cheap stuff as her "Nice People" and other recent plays. Since writing directly for the Broadway box-office, this playwright has done progressively poor work. I regret that I can see nothing in her present exhibit to merit serious criticism.

Book Article No. 158

By *H. L. Mencken*

I

On Log-Rolling

"PRIVILEGE," by Michael Sadlier (*Putnam*), starts off with a bombastic "advertisement to the American edition," wherein the author solemnly warns the corn-fed critics of the Republic against falling into the errors made by some of their British colleagues. It is written in the lofty, patronizing style immemorially affected by Britishers addressing Yankee colonials. Judging by the newspaper notices it is being taken quite seriously, and is having the desired effect. That is to say, the aboriginal Taines and Brandeses are treating the book in a perfectly grave manner, and hailing its author as an august successor to Merrick, Lawrence, Swinnerton, and all the other beneficiaries of latter-day English log-rolling. But what is actually in it? Simply a third-rate story of sex on the loose, a perfumed shocker of the standard model, badly imagined and crudely told. It would be difficult, indeed, to imagine a more feeble and unconvincing narrative, or more wooden characters. There is not a moment from end to end when anyone of them seems real. There is nothing significant, or even amusing, in what they do or say. The thing is frankly by Hall Caine out of Ibsen's "Ghosts." Of the "stylistic" embellishments mentioned by the author himself I can't find a trace. If such a novel came from an American it would be dismissed as trivial, and perhaps even as trashy. But coming in the hold of a Cunarder, with dubious British encomiums plastered all over it, gets the

sober attention and unintelligent praise that always greet such merchandise.

This puerile Anglomania has gone so far of late that it takes the form of a downright frenzy. English opinion, however childish, is heard and adopted with the utmost gravity, despite the obvious fact that nine-tenths of all the current criticism in England is extremely dubious, and no intelligent Englishman pays any heed to it. Log-rolling over there, indeed, is practised even more shamelessly than it is here. Let an author who belongs to one of the back-slapping groups publish a novel or a book of poems, however puerile, and at once it is bombarded by the critical members with streams of cologne water and liquid vaseline. Of late there are signs of an organized interchange of goose-grease between the two countries—a sort of Sulgrave Foundation or Pilgrim's Club of literary hair-dressers and masseurs. Needless to say, no author of any genuine merit is the beneficiary of such arrangements. Among the English novelists, for example, W. L. George stands clearly aloof from all log-rolling—and pays for it by getting a good many extremely waspish notices from the log-rollers, some of which are later copied by the professional polishers of British boots over here. In the opposite direction, there is the same imbecile effort to cry down first-rate men. Consider, for instance, James Branch Cabell. Cabell, like George, is outside the breastworks on both sides of the ocean. Well, his "Jurgen" is discussed by the English log-rollers as if it were some cheap nonsense by a Chambers or an Ethel M. Dell. Chambers, in fact, is

actually treated in a more dignified manner than Cabell! So with Sherwood Anderson: his "Winesburg, Ohio," unquestionably a work of the highest importance, has been derided unintelligently, and, I believe, dishonestly. For a third example, there is Henry Aikman, author of "Zell." "Zell" has plain defects, but it is equally plainly a serious work, and done in a respectable manner; there is certainly nothing trivial and shoddy about it. Nevertheless, Mr. Aikman's English publisher has had to take advertising space in the *London Times Literary Supplement* to protest against its contemptuous dismissal by the log-rollers. In all England but six reviewers have so much as noticed it, and one of them treated it to an extravagant and unintelligent slating.

This attitude toward American books, of course, is not new, nor is it wholly disingenuous. From the earliest days the English have been suspicious of all printed matter produced on this side of the ocean, and their capacity for crying down or overlooking American writers of genuine originality has been only surpassed by the similar gift of native critics. They were quite unaware of Poe and Whitman until the French told them the news, and they would have missed Emerson had it not been for Carlyle, a Scotchman. Among the American novelists of today they seem to notice only Mrs. Wharton and Hergesheimer, perhaps the two most thoroughly un-American novelists among us. What lies under all this is a very natural dislike of small differences, of what seem to be intolerable *gaucheries*. An American thinks and writes in the English language, and yet not quite like an Englishman. He is, in fact, usually *not* an Englishman: the pure Anglo-Saxons who amount to anything in our current literature could be numbered on the fingers of two hands. This difference affects an Englishman much as we are affected by a touch of Cockney accent: it arrests his attention unpleasantly, and fills him with a vague disgust. As American English and standard English diverge further and further, and the

United States moves more and more toward cultural autonomy, this sense of unpleasantness will increase, and so even the most intelligent English opinion will tend to coincide with that of the log-rollers of today. It is an inevitable process, and denouncing it will not stop it. But there is certainly no reason why Americans should join the more stupid of the English in the absurdities that it currently engenders. To swallow such a hollow piece of work as "Privilege" in all innocence is to confess to a degree of stupidity bordering on imbecility. To hymn it dutifully on the bald ground that a group of English log-rollers whoop it up is to perform an act that is simply silly.

II

Various Fictions

I HAVE mentioned W. L. George. His "Ursula Trent" (*Harper*) seems to me to lack the fundamental persuasiveness that marks some of his earlier novels, notably "Blind Alley" and "The Making of an Englishman." I haven't the slightest doubt that such girls as Ursula have actually done what he makes her do—that is, revolt against the stupidity of family life, take a header into the brimstone, and then come safely ashore again. The fact, indeed, is a commonplace: Greenwich Village is full of ladies from highly respectable households who now wear smocks, smoke Bull Durham, piddle at some art or other, and flaunt their unchastity defiantly—ladies who will presently go back to Gopher Prairie, conveniently forget all their carnalities, marry honest hinds, and spend the rest of their lives uplifting the neighborhood and raising cannon-fodder. But George makes two mistakes in his presentation of Ursula. In the first place, he lifts her out of a class—the county gentry—which would probably resist her revolt far more tenaciously and enterprisingly than he shows it resisting, and in the second place, he makes her disappearance in London a bit too facile and complete. But against that double defect, if defect it be, he arrays the whole

armory of his customary merits—his continuous play of sharp observation, his quick grasp of character, his constant inventiveness, unconventionality and humor. A novel by George always gets out of the current fictional ruts. It reveals a mind that is alert, daring and original. He is never stodgy, or commonplace, or dull. He puts a great deal more into his books than mere stories.

. . . In the other English fiction that has reached me, the best work, and by far, is in W. Somerset Maugham's "The Trembling of a Leaf" (*Doran*), a collection of short pieces. They are all tales of the Pacific islands, and they are all excellent. Among them is the brilliant and searching novelette, "Miss Thompson," lately printed in *THE SMART SET*; here it is called "Rain." More good stuff is in Maugham's "Liza of Lambeth" (*Doran*), though it seems to me to fall considerably below "Rain." Hugh Walpole's "The Thirteen Travelers" (*Doran*) has the air of hack-work; there is a good idea in it, but it is carried out unevenly, and often feebly. "Quiet Interior," by E. B. C. Jones (*Boni-Liveright*) challenges comparison with Evelyn Scott's "The Narrow House" and I think that "The Narrow House" comes off first. "Blinkers," by H. A. Vachel (*Doran*), and "Rose and Rose," by E. V. Lucas (*Doran*), are sentimental pieces. "The Master of Man," by Hall Caine (*Lippincott*), is literary garbage.

Various new American novels are more interesting—for example, "The Wasted Generation," by Owen Johnson (*Little-Brown*); "The Beginning of Wisdom," by Stephen Vincent Benét (*Holt*); "The Briary-Bush," by Floyd Dell (*Knopf*); "The Blood of the Conquerors," by Harvey Fergusson (*Knopf*), and "The Girls," by Edna Ferber (*Doubleday*). "The Wasted Generation" and "The Girls" naturally range themselves together; both represent efforts by authors who have enjoyed great popular success to transport themselves to more austere levels. The Johnson venture must be set down a failure; before he is half through the author

succumbs to the conventions of magazine fiction, and thereafter his story goes to pieces. Let him try again. Miss Ferber, on the contrary, rises to the new altitude with the greatest ease. "The Girls" embodies a novel idea, the story is adeptly planned, and the author shows the utmost ingenuity and address in the writing of it. The girls of the title are three virgins of the same Chicago family—old Charlotte, seventy or over; Lottie, in the middle years, and young Charlie, just out of her teens. What Miss Ferber essays to do is to show the reactions of these ladies to the staggering phenomena of a changing world. It is a story full of shrewdness and accurate observation—a story with characters that simply radiate life—a piece of work that glitters with cleverness. I raise a respectful whoop for the author. At one stroke, she has delivered herself from the magazines.

Fergusson and Benét are newcomers. The former shows vastly the greater capacity for organizing so large and difficult a thing as a novel. His story of the conflict between the old Spanish culture and the new civilization of the Yankee in the Southwest is extremely well managed, and there is a steady dramatic movement from end to end. The whole play of forces goes on in the soul of young Ramon Delcaser, last of his line. It is a struggle that is bound to end with defeat; more, with ignominious defeat. In the last scene we behold poor Ramon amid the ashes of his dream—stolidly sunning himself, like a mud turtle, in the lordly New Mexican sunlight that even the Yankees cannot take away. The story is told soberly and without the slightest attempt at stylistic display, but the very gorgeousness of its materials gives it an almost operatic color. But its great merit is its superlative plausibility, its complete air of reality. A sound acquaintance with the people and places dealt with is obvious. And, as I say, Mr. Fergusson knows how to manage a story. Of all the more recent débutants he is unquestionably the most promising. Mr. Benét shows a great deal less practical skill. His "Beginning

of Wisdom" contains some fine details—for example, the love-affair of Phil Sellaby at Harvard, and the incident of the deportation of miners—but its general effect is that of chaos. It seems, indeed, to be a gathering of discordant sketches, some in prose and some in verse, rather than an actual novel. Toward the end, the author turns his hero into a movie star, and so stiffens him into artificiality. But there is enough of soundness in the book, despite these capital defects, to lift it above the commonplace. With more experience, the author should do much better.

Floyd Dell's "The Briary-Bush" seems to me to miss wholly the high mark of his "Moon-Calf." The same Felix Fay is the principal personage, but all the careful observation and brilliant details of "Moon-Calf" are missing. What we have in place of them is simply a long analysis, seldom very illuminating, of an ill-considered marriage between a half-baked young man and a lady with yearnings. In brief, the third act of "A Doll's House" rewritten in terms of Chicago, with overtones of Sheridan Square. The thing simply refuses to live. It is done with much skill and no little originality, but the glowing reality of "Moon-Calf" is not there.

III

Walt Whitman

PROF. EMORY HOLLOWAY'S two fat volumes of Walt Whitman's "Uncollected Poetry and Prose" (*Doubleday*) are the fruits of a long and laborious investigation, intelligently conceived and admirably carried out. Has any American professor of English, for two dozen years past, done anything better? If so, I have never heard of it. The average pedant, after painfully clawing his way through the mouldering files of forgotten newspapers and magazines and running down every scrap of Whitman copy still unburned by the common hangman, would have hurled his material at the reader in a huge and disorderly mass, and so made six or eight unreadable volumes. But Holloway organizes his

discoveries with the greatest skill, rejecting the wholly trivial, summarizing much of the rest, and printing the genuinely interesting remainder with notes that really interpret it and hence are quite necessary to it. The result is a work of the utmost significance and value—a work that no admirer of Whitman can afford to miss. There is not a useless page in it. It presents Whitman fairly and at full length. It shows the slow growth of his ideas, the gradual formation of his style, the steady extension of his contacts. And as the panorama unfolds the learned professor stands in the wings, explaining whatever needs to be explained, and letting fall, ever and anon, a critical remark that is sound and satisfying. Why doesn't he do a life of Whitman, so long wanted? He has the materials—as his article on the poet's mythical love affairs, printed in the *Dial* a year ago, well demonstrated—and he has the patience and proper point of view. I nominate him for the job forthwith. All the existing treatises on the Camden sage are deficient in this way or that. Some are too reserved. Some are too worshipful. Some are masses of palpable lies. Holloway could do a good one.

If he ever tackles it I hope he introduces an informative chapter on the development of Whitman's style, particularly in prose—a subject that has always interested me a good deal more than the origin of his ideas, most of which, whatever their source, were nonsensical. It was, indeed, the style that made the man, not the ideas. The latter are taken seriously, in these melancholy days of disillusionment, only by the more naïve sort of Socialists. But the way that Walt wrote was a very special way, and it has probably done more than any other man's way, here in the United States, to get back into written English some of the freedom and roguishness that it had in the days of Elizabeth. Whitman, however, did not come by it naturally; it was by no means a gift of the gods. In his earlier years, as Prof. Holloway's specimens show, he wrote exactly like any other third-

rate journalist of his time, which is to say, mellifluously, heavily, idiotically. Read, for example, his early Brooklyn *Eagle* editorials; they might have been done by N. P. Willis, or even by Rufus Wilmot Griswold. Poe, who died in 1849, never quite emancipated himself from the snares of that style—a decaying heritage from the Eighteenth Century. But Whitman, along about the time of Poe's death, suddenly threw it off, and thereafter his style became more and more loose and free, and more and more picturesque and vivid, and more and more truly eloquent. Turn to his note-books for 1848, and you will see it beginning to show itself. Turn to "An American Primer," and you will find it in full flower.

It is my private notion that the sources of it are to be sought in the style of Thomas Carlyle, who performed the same service for written English in England that Whitman performed for it in America. As Prof. Holloway shows, Whitman, when he first became aware of Carlyle, was rather repelled by his writing. On October 17, 1846, reviewing "Heroes and Hero Worship" in the *Eagle*, he deplored it as "rapt, weird and grotesque" and expressed the opinion that it would be better for Carlyle to "conform to the prevalent mode." Worse, he laid down the dogma that style was "not of infinite importance anyhow," and deserved a good deal less attention than it usually got. This from the man who was later to write "Specimen Days" and to revise and re-revise "Leaves of Grass" until every line had its special and incomparable character! But second thoughts came soon enough. On April 14, 1847, less than six months afterward, he reviewed "Past and Present"—and Carlyle won him completely. "There is," he confessed, "a sort of fascination about the man. His weird, wild way—his phrases, welded together as it were, with strange twistings of the terminatives of words—his startling suggestions—his taking up, fish-hook like, certain matters of abuse—make an *original* kind of composition, that gets, after a

little usage, to be strangely agreeable!" Here is not only admiration; here is also the beginning of imitation. Carlyle himself, in fact, might have written that sentence. Later on the borrowed manner was ironed out, engauded with fresh decorations, made thoroughly Whitmanesque. Not an idea came with it; Carlyle and Whitman must remain at the opposite poles intellectually for all time. But I think the American poet's debt to the Scotch historian's style was very great, and that it has been much underestimated. Let Prof. Holloway give attention to the matter—he barely mentions it in the present work—when he writes his full-length Whitmaniad.

IV

Madison Julius Cawein

A vast and hefty tome celebrates this dead poet, solemnly issued by his mourning friends in Louisville. The editor is Otto A. Rothert, who confesses that he knew Cawein but a year or two, and never read his poetry until after his death. The contributors include such local *literati* as Reuben Post Halleck, Leigh Gordon Giltner, Anna Blanche McGill and Elvira S. Miller Slaughter. Most of the ladies gush over the departed in the manner of high-school teachers paying tribute to Plato, Montaigne or Dante Alighieri. His young son, now seventeen years old, contributes by far the most vivid and intelligent account of him; it is, indeed, very well written, as, in a different way, is the contribution of Charles Hamilton Musgrove, an old newspaper friend. The ladies, as I hint, simply swoon and grow lyrical. But it is a fascinating volume, all the same, and well worth the room it takes on the shelf. Mr. Rothert starts off with what he calls a "picturography" of Cawein—the poet's father and mother in the raiment of 1865, the coat-of-arms of his mother's great-grandfather's uncle, the house which now stands on the site of the house in which he was born, the rock spring from which he used to drink as a boy, a group showing him with his three brothers,

another showing him with one brother and their cousin Fred, Cawein himself with side-boards, the houses he lived in, the place where he worked, the walks he liked around Louisville, his wife and baby, the hideous bust of him in the Louisville Public Library, the church from which he was buried, his modest grave in Cave Hill Cemetery—in brief, all the photographs that collect about a man as he staggers through life, and entertain his ribald grandchildren after he is gone. Then comes a treatise on the ancestry and youth of the poet, then a collection of newspaper clippings about him, then a gruesomely particular account of his death, then a fragment of autobiography, then a selection from his singularly dull letters, then some prose pieces from his pen, then the aforesaid tributes of his neighbors, and finally a bibliography of his works, and an index to them.

As I say, a volume of fearful bulk and beam, but nevertheless full of curious and interesting things. Cawein, of course, was not a poet of the first rank, nor is it certain that he has any secure place in the second rank, but in the midst of a great deal of obvious and feeble stuff he undoubtedly wrote some nature lyrics of excellent quality. The woods and the fields were his delight. He loved to roam through them, observing the flowers, the birds, the tall trees, the shining sky overhead, the green of Spring, the reds and browns of Autumn, the still whites of Winter. There were times when he got his ecstasy into words—when he wrote poems that were sound and beautiful. These poems will not be forgotten; there will be no history of American literature written for a hundred years that does not mention Madison Cawein. But what will the literary historians make of the man himself? How will they explain his possession, however fitfully, of the divine gift—his genuine kinship with Keats and Shelley? Certainly no more unlikely candidate for the bays ever shinned up Parnassus. His father was a quack doctor; his mother was a professional spiritualist;

he himself, for years and years, made a living as cashier in a gambling-house! Could anything be more grotesque? Is it possible to imagine a more improbable setting for a poet? Yet the facts are the facts, and Mr. Rothert makes no attempt whatever to conceal them. Add a final touch of the bizarre: Cawein fell over one morning while shaving in his bathroom, and cracked his head on the bathtub, and after his death there was a row over his life insurance. Mr. Rothert presents all of the documents. The autopsy is described; the death certificate is quoted. . . . A strange, strange tale, indeed!

V

The Eighteenth Century

HERE is richness: "The Memoirs of William Hickey" (*Knopf*). In brief, the meticulous autobiography, omitting nothing, of an Eighteenth Century amalgam of Benvenuto Cellini and Casanova, with a dash of Pecksniff. The fellow is really of almost fabulous rascality: he lies incessantly, robs his trusting father, steals the best girls of his bosom friends. And yet, with it all, he maintains the air of a highly respectable man, and is quick to resent every affront to his honor. The scenes shift from the London of Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith to the India of Thackeray's nabobs, and then back to London again, and then to a Jamaica as yet unpolluted by tourists, and then to Lisbon, and then to India once more. I know of no book, not even Boswell's Johnson, which makes the early Georgian era more vivid. The whole life of London is laid before us, and especially the night life: the gay doings at Vauxhall, the sports on the river, the gaudy gorges of the City merchants, the rough encounters on the streets, the colossal drinking, the no less colossal drabbing. Hickey was no puny three-bottle man. When he sat down to wine he drank it by the basket. What headaches in the morning—and how melodramatically described! Two volumes of solid enchantment. Read the first chapter, and you will go to the

end. For more than a hundred years the manuscript was lost. What a find, indeed!

VI

Brief Notices

A LOITERER IN PARIS, by Helen W. Henderson (*Doran*). The usual text and illustrations, but rather better done than usual.

THE MIND OF THE BUYER, by Harry Dexter Kitson, Ph.D. (*Macmillan*). Successful effort of a psychology professor to reduce the art of bamboozling to charts, tables, abscisse and mathematical formulæ.

SELF DEVELOPMENT, by H. Addington Bruce (*Funk-Wagnalls*). Half platitudes and half nonsense.

MY OWN AFFAIRS, by Princess Louise of Belgium (*Doran*). The alleged autobiography, probably nine-tenths lies, of the bawdy daughter of the late King Leopold II. Not obscene.

ROMAIN ROLLAND, by Stefan Zweig (*Seltzer*). The first biographical and critical work in English upon the celebrated Frenchman. (It is actually translated from the German.) The author is an avowed disciple, but nevertheless the book is sensibly written and is of genuine interest and value.

MY MAIDEN EFFORT, edited by Gelett Burgess (*Doubleday*). A hundred and twenty-five members of the Authors' League tell how they horned into beautiful letters. Among the authors represented are Robert W. Chambers, Berton Braley, Coningsby Dawson, James Montgomery Flagg, Cosmo Hamilton, Emerson Hough, Laura Jean Libbey, Harold MacGrath, Orison Swett Marden, Annie Nathan Meyer, Cleveland Moffett, Cale Young Rice and Harold Bell Wright. Among those not represented are Theodore Dreiser, Edith Wharton, Willa Sibert Cather, Sherwood Anderson, Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, Amy Lowell, Frank Harris, James Branch Cabell, Mary G. Watts, Robert Herrick, Eugene O'Neill, George Santayana, Lizette Woodworth Reese, Sara Teasdale, John McClure, Floyd Dell, Winston Churchill, Mary Johnstone and Zona Gale.

THE TRAGEDY OF NAN, by John Masefield (*Macmillan*). A new edition of Masefield's play, beautifully printed but with some banal illustrations.

THE CRUISE OF THE KAWA, by Walter E. Traprock (*Putnam*). An attempt at an elaborate burlesque of the current literature of travel and venery in the South Seas. After the first two or three chapters it becomes very labored.

GUIDE BOOK TO WOMEN, by James James (*Dutton*). The usual sentimental plati-

tudes, relieved by an instructive treatise on the technique of seduction.

THE CONQUEST OF FEAR, by Basil King (*Doubleday*). Pious piffle.

LADY ADELA, by Gerald Gould (*Mitchell*). Amusing buffoonery, with capital pictures by Will Dyson.

THE HARP OF LIFE, by J. Hartley Manners (*Doran*). Another sugar-teat by the author of "Peg o' My Heart."

THE GREAT DECEPTION, by Samuel Colcord (*Boni-Liveright*). A belated argument, extremely dull and unconvincing, for the League of Nations.

IMPRESSIONS AND OPINIONS, by Havelock Ellis (*Houghton*). The war-time notes and diaries of one of the sanest, most learned and withal most charming Englishmen alive today. A book of genuine distinction.

ROBERT HENRI, by William Yarrow and Louis Bouche (*Boni-Liveright*). The first volume of what promises to be an important and valuable series of monographs on American painters and sculptors. The text is well-considered and the reproductions of the artist's paintings are excellent.

RUTH ST. DENIS: PIONEER AND PROPHET, by Ted Shawn (*Howells*). Two enormous and sumptuously printed volumes upon the aims and ideas of the well-known dancer. She acquired her original inspiration, it appears, by seeing "a cigarette poster depicting the Egyptian goddess Isis" in the show-window of a Buffalo drug-store. I am no connoisseur of dancing, and hence do not pretend to estimate her contributions to the art. But what gorgeous books!

DER AMERIKANISCHE MENSCH, by Annalise Schmidt (*Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft*). A penetrating treatise on the American, male and female, by a German woman who lived here for three years. A good book to translate.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN FUTURE, by A. G. (*Seltzer*). The usual polite nothings, but mellowed by a sound description of the new Americanism: "When it has made up its mind it moves with the unity and momentum of a herd of bison, and woe to the dissident who crosses its path!"

DECADENCE, by Remy de Gourmont, translated by W. A. Bradley (*Harcourt*). An admirable selection from the essays of the brilliant Frenchmen, intelligently selected and very well translated. The first volume in English to give an accurate account of his principal ideas.

AND THE SPHINX SPOKE, by Paul Eldridge (*Stratford*). A collection of little essays in cynicism, some of them reprinted from THE SMART SET. A few are feeble, but not many.



Statement of the Ownership, Management, Circulation, etc., Required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of Smart Set. Published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1st, 1921. State of New York, County of New York, ss. Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared E. F. Warner, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of The Smart Set, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24th, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Smart Set Company, Inc., 25 West 45th St., New York City; Editors, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Managing Editors, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Business Manager, E. F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City. 2. That the owners are: Smart Set Company, Inc., 25 West 45th St., New York City; E. F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City; George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Estate of E. F. Crowe, 33 West 42nd St., New York City. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: W. D. Mann Estate, 8 West 45th St., New York City; Mrs. E. Mann-Vynne, 8 West 45th St., New York City; George Jean Nathan, H. L. Mencken, E. F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City; E. F. Crowe Estate, 33 West 42nd St., New York City. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. (Signed) E. F. WARNER, Business Manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of September, 1921. [Seal] A. W. SUTTON, Notary Public, Westchester County. (My commission expires March 30, 1922.)

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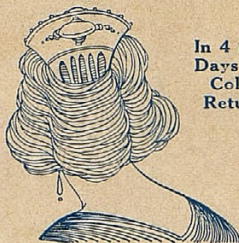
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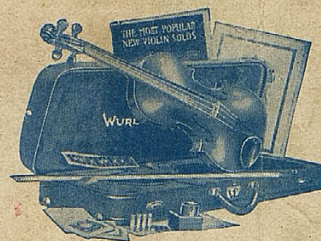
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